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# SPINOZA AND RELIGION

# Spinoza and Religion

A study of Spinoza's metaphysics and of his particular utterances in regard to religion, with a view to determining the significance of his thought for religion and incidentally his personal attitude toward it.

By

Elmer Ellsworth Powell, A. M., Ph. D.

Professor of Philosophy in Miami University

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# PREFACE.

A German translator and expounder of Spinoza's works declares that in the whole history of human thought there is not to be found a system more difficult to understand and to explain. After studying the system in its details, I am disposed to accept this assertion as probably true. I have blinked no difficulties, however; but have felt it my duty to study each one until I have succeeded either in harmonizing it with the system as a whole, or in clearly showing it to be a logical inconsistency. Spinoza's logical inconsistencies are of two kinds: (1) fallacies of reasoning, and (2) the acceptance of contradictory propositions which are correctly deduced, although from different and incompatible presuppositions.

My excuse for adding another book to the already formidable pile of literature on Spinoza is the fact that his relation to religion has not yet been made the subject of specific, comprehensive, and *candid* treatment; and that consequently there prevail not only among intelligent people in general, but even among students of philosophy, the vaguest possible notions in regard to this matter. Anyone who may feel disposed to think that I am performing a work of supererogation, is asked to suspend his judgment until he has read Chapter II. of my "Introduction."

In order to go to the bottom of the question and attempt to settle it, it has been necessary to pass beyond Spinoza's specific utterances in regard to re-

ligion, and to subject his metaphysics to careful analysis. Those who are not used to abstract thinking (if any such should do me the honor of reading my book), will doubtless find my exposition of Spinoza's metaphysics in some parts difficult, perhaps dull; although I have spared myself no pains, in order to attain the utmost clearness.

In conducting my investigations and in presenting the results, I have endeavored to maintain a strictly impersonal attitude, aiming solely to determine (1) what Spinoza taught and (2) how his doctrine is related to the religious consciousness. Accordingly, I must disappoint those who seek in the present work either a polemic against Spinoza or an apology for him. I will not deny, however, that my book is after all a polemic, a polemic against a mistaken interpretation of Spinoza's philosophy and personality.

While, as the basis of my judgments, I have taken, of course, Spinoza's own writings (in the original Latin where extant, and in the Dutch translation where the Latin is lost), I have derived valuable hints from several of his expounders. My obligations are acknowledged in the foot-notes to the text. The "Biographical Sketch" is the part for which I claim the least merit; for, considering it as of minor importance for the question at issue, I have been willing to accept, in regard to the original sources, the critical labor of others, save when facts significant for our estimate of Spinoza's personality were involved. In this part I am most indebted to Dr. Freudenthal of Breslau, who has done so much in recent years to enrich our scanty knowledge of Spinoza's life; although I have sometimes

been led to express quite other judgments on the facts. In a general way, I owe most to my former instructor in philosophy, Professor Benno Erdmann; although he should not be held responsible for the point of view here represented.

Spinoza's works I have cited according to Van Vloten and Land's edition: "Benedicti de Spinoza Opera," The Hague, 1895.

E. E. POWELL.

March, 1906.

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# INTRODUCTION

## CHAPTER I.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.[1]

### 1. *Historical Antecedents.*

Baruch (Latin, Benedictus) Spinoza was born of Jewish parents at Amsterdam on the 24th of November, 1632. His father at least was directly from Portugal, perhaps originally from Spain. During the generations immediately preceding Baruch's time, his race and family passed through experiences which were not without significance for his own life and which therefore deserve brief mention.

In the fifteenth century the "Holy Office" (the Inquisition), which had been established in Arragon by Gregory IX. as early as 1232 with a view to extirpating the Albigensian heresy, had fallen almost into disuse. In Castile, Leon, and Portugal it had, in fact, never taken permanent root; but with the union of Castile with Arragon toward the end of

[1] The principal sources of our knowledge of Spinoza's life are given in Freudenthal's "Die Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's" (1899), which contains the early biographies by Colerus (Köhler), Lucas, etc., together with many important documents not published before. The most recent and complete biography is the first volume of Freudenthal's "Spinoza: sein Leben und seine Lehre" (1904). With this compare, "Spinoza en zijn Kring," by the Dutch author, K. O. Meinsma (1896). Those to whom these are not accessible will find a somewhat completer biography than is here given in Martineau's "Study of Spinoza" (3d ed. 1895), and in Pollock's, "Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy" (2d ed. 1899). Martineau's in particular would now require to be altered in some details.

that century by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, there opened a new era for the Inquisition in the whole of the Peninsula. Its chief object now was to punish baptized Jews who secretly relapsed to their old religion. The Catholic zeal of the otherwise gentle Queen and the financial distress of the King, whose treasury would be filled from the confiscated goods of wealthy Jews, disposed the sovereigns to hear with favor the Dominican advocates of a more reckless and cruel type of persecution than had hitherto prevailed. Early in 1481, therefore, a reorganized form of the Inquisition began its work, and before the end of that year, according to Mariana, a Jesuit historian, more than two thousand perished by the flames in the archbishopric of Seville and the bishopric of Cadiz alone. In 1492 the movement took on a new phase. The Jews of all Spain were notified by royal decree that those still loyal to their faith would after a short term be required to leave the Kingdom. They were to be allowed to take with them most of their goods, except gold and silver. When the days of grace expired and they were called upon to choose between baptism and banishment, they set out in swarms toward those lands that seemed the least inhospitable. It is estimated that 90,000 passed from Castile alone into Portugal, the King of this country having promised them temporary protection for a money consideration. But here also they were soon confronted with the old alternative, conversion or exile.

Many of the Spanish Jews possessed less heroism or less depth of religious conviction than did these emigrants, and consented to Christian baptism and

to the practice of what they considered idolatry, as the price of remaining in Spain. But their apostasy purchased them little peace; for their conversion was regarded as a mere outward pretense, and they were shadowed by informants, on whose testimony many were from time to time condemned to the flames. In both Kingdoms, however, not a few families succeeded in living the double life for several generations.

To these so-called "New Christians" in their distressful condition came the report, about a century after the exodus from Spain above-mentioned, that the northern provinces of Holland had decided every citizen "should remain free in his religion." Consequently in 1593 a small group of Portuguese (or Portuguese and Spanish) Jews shook the dust off their feet and embarked at Oporto for Holland. It has been conjectured that Spinoza's father was one of this company. We know now that he was not, but that he came with a subsequent company of the same kind. His home had been at Figueira near Coimbra, Portugal; but we have reason to believe that the family came originally from Spain. This supposition is not inconsistent with the assumption that for an indefinite time preceding their emigration to Holland their home had been in Portugal. Indeed this seems to be the only theory that harmonizes all the facts.

2. *The Environment in which Spinoza's lot was cast.*

In the seventeenth century Holland, where Spinoza was born and passed the whole of his life, was in many respects the most favored country in Europe. Not least among the facts that justify this

assertion is the well-known one that it was more completely than any other country the home of religious toleration. The long but victorious struggle with intolerant Spain, the acquisition of colonies beyond the seas, extensive commercial relations with different countries, and the presence of people of various religious tenets, had led to the recognition of the rights of the individual conscience. Its rulers clearly saw the justice and wisdom of granting complete religious liberty; and, left to themselves, they probably would not have been guilty of acts of persecution. As a matter of fact, however, the influential clergy of the Reformed Church, supported by ignorance and bigotry among the people, sometimes forced the hand of the government to acts of intolerance. But at no time and in no instance did persecution take the form of active inquisition into private opinions. Everyone was permitted to *think* what he pleased, provided he did not aggressively and contumaciously seek to propagate offensive views. For actively disseminating what seemed to be harmful heresies or atheism, imprisonment and banishment were in a few cases the penalties inflicted. In so far as the spasmodic intolerance expressed itself in civil proceedings, it generally took the form (1) of restricting to members of the Reformed Church the right of regular public worship, others being permitted to meet only in private houses; (2) of depriving sectarians of the right to hold civil offices; (3) of prohibiting, confiscating, and burning heretical writings. But in spite of these limitations on liberty of thought and speech, dissenters and free-thinkers found themselves comparatively secure in Holland. All could publish

books and pamphlets with the strong probability that these would not be suppressed. By re-printing condemned books in a new place and under a new name, even radical free-thinkers succeeded in keeping their ideas before the public.

Another advantage enjoyed by Holland in the seventeenth century was the great wealth gained through its colonies and commerce. At the same time, perhaps in part as a consequence of material prosperity, it became the home of literature and art, and disputed with France the leadership of Europe in these matters. It was the age of Grotius in general learning, of Huygens in natural science, of Rembrandt in art. How important for Spinoza's development all this must have been, need not be remarked.

In regard to the Jewish colony in Amsterdam, it ought to be noted that in Spinoza's time it no longer had an exclusively Spanish-Portuguese character, since it had received accessions from time to time from every part of Europe, and had thus become quite heterogeneous. Even the Spanish-Portuguese element must have embraced very different types of character. Among its members were families which had refused in 1492 to accept Christianity and had consequently left Spain for Portugal. These no doubt represented the sturdier moral fibre of the colony; but even these, though braving no inconsiderable hardships for conscience' sake, had ultimately come short of the spirit of martyrdom; for, discouraged by their disappointing reception in Portugal, they had finally accepted there the baptism they had refused in Spain. In short, they had long been accustomed to live a double life. As com-

pared with these, those families that came directly from Spain to Amsterdam, and probably most of the Portuguese Jews also, must have possessed either less depth of conviction or less moral stamina; for, when threatened, they had immediately submitted to baptism. A preponderance of practical interests had always, it seems, determined them, whenever a profession of their faith would cause them serious loss, to accommodate themselves to their surroundings by a life of prudent hypocrisy. While we have not the heart to blame them, we can but recognize that they were far from being thorough-going idealists whose subjective interest in moral consistency would cause them to break their heads against the solid walls of external fact.

In its religious aspects the influence of this environment on Spinoza seems to have been rather to excite antipathies than to induce conformation, and may be recognized to some extent no doubt in his subsequent radical repudiation of ceremonialism and his contempt for religious fanaticism. But he was not entirely immune from unwholesome effects of other features of his environment. The community and the home in which he grew up received by tradition the habits of thought and feeling acquired by the fathers under the shivering dread of persecution. This circumstance both explains and palliates Spinoza's excessive timidity and his over-valuation of prudence.

### 3. *Spinoza's Early Years.*

Michael de Spinoza (or d'Espinoza), the father of our philosopher, was a respectable and intelligent tradesman. The local records show that not less

than four times he held the chief office either in one of the three congregations existing before 1639 or in the united congregation after that date, and that he was once administrator of the loan-agency connected with the Synagogue. Of Hannah Deborah, Benedict's mother, whose family name has not been discovered, we know only that she was Michael's second wife and that she died before her son had completed his sixth year. During these early years, Benedict's chief companions were probably his half-sister Rebecca and his own sister Miriam, both several years his senior. In his ninth year he was presented with a stepmother, of whose character we are ignorant.

With the school which Spinoza attended we are better acquainted than with the conditions of his home life. Extant documents recently published tell us the names of his probable instructors, the subjects they taught, and even the salaries they received. The school had seven grades. In the first, the pupils learned the Hebrew alphabet, spelling, and the reading signs; in the second, they practiced the sections of the Pentateuch appointed for the Sabbath service, giving special attention to the conventional pauses, rhythm, and intonation; in the third, they translated portions of the Pentateuch into Spanish; in the fourth, passages from the Prophets; in the fifth, they studied the commentaries of the great Talmudist Raschi; in the sixth and seventh, the Talmud itself.[1]

Among the teachers under whose formative influence Spinoza began his mental development, we should mention Menasseh ben Isreal and Saul Levi

[1] Freudenthal's "Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's," p. 113.

Morteira. It was Menasseh ben Isreal (1604-1657) who must have introduced him to the study of the Talmud. This amiable personality was a scholar—he is credited among other things with a knowledge of ten languages—but not a thinker. He clung firmly not only to the traditional Judaism as represented by the Rabbinical system, but also to the Cabala; and, like his less educated colleagues, regarded every word in the Talmud and the Zohar as divinely inspired.[1]

Saul Levi Morteira, Spinoza's chief instructor in the Talmud, was a man of somewhat different type. He was born at Venice in 1596, and studied with an eminent physician of the place, who later became private physician to Maria dei Medici in France. Morteira, who accompanied his master, was thus given a taste of court life. When he came to Amsterdam at the age of twenty, it was probably his prestige, his knowledge of the world and his courtly manners, that secured him the invitation to remain there and to undertake the Synagogue service. His selection as chief instructor in the Talmud when the Synagogue school was organized in 1639, indicates that during the twenty-three years subsequent to his arrival he had known how to retain the first-won respect of the community, and to gain a reputation for Rabbinical learning in addition. But he seems to have enjoyed no fame for erudition outside of Amsterdam. His sermons, the only printed produc-

[1] "Cabala" is the name of the system of theosophy which is alleged to have been transmitted by the mouths of the Patriarchs and Prophets from the time of the first man. "Zohar" is the name of the compilation of these traditions alleged to have been made by Simon ben Yochi (70-110 A. D.), but assigned by disinterested scholars to the thirteenth century.

tions of his literary activity, are said to have a philosophical complexion, but no depth of thought.

A glance at the course of instruction given in the school suffices to discover that the Talmud was the only subject that was calculated in any degree to interest and stimulate a young mind of logical bent. In order to estimate the influence of this study, it is necessary to recall its exact character. The Talmud comprises two parts: the Mishnah, the body of oral, i. e., post-Mosaic legal (in great part ceremonial) traditions; and the Gemarah, learned commentaries on the Mishnah. It exists in two recensions, the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud, both completed before the end of the fifth century A. D. Of these a competent authority observes: "The doctors of both recensions, although they primarily discuss the correctness of the text and the meaning of the Mishnah and what should be the right legal decision, do not confine themselves to this. They introduce, as occasion serves, not merely the whole of the oral tradition handed down to their time, and the necessary interpretations of the various laws to be found in the Pentateuch and other sacred writings, but exhibit also, though only in a fragmentary manner, an almost complete cycle of the profane sciences as current orally and known to them by books composed by Jews and Gentiles."[1] It is well to note that the Talmud contained not only religious matter, but also obsolete ideas in every field of knowledge.

The method of imparting instruction in the Talmud is said to have been an alternation of questions and answers, of difficulties and solutions. This

[1] Solomon M. Schiller Szinessy, Encyc. Brit.

single redeeming feature of the School was well calculated to develop logical acuteness. Spinoza's interest in these exercises is attested by the tradition that at the age of fifteen he was much praised by Morteira for his uncommon penetration.

It has been supposed with some plausibility that after finishing the School he decided, for the sake of gratifying his taste for learning, to become a Rabbi. If this be true, he must have spent the next few years chiefly in more thorough study of the Bible and Talmud, and also in diligently reading the great Jewish writers on the philosophy of religion, especially Maimonides and Ibn ben Ezra, of whom his writings betray a considerable knowledge.

Outside the School and his theological environment, there were other intellectual influences to which he was more or less responsive, especially from his fifteenth year on. By this time, as we have already remarked, the Jewish colony had grown to considerable dimensions, and had acquired a cosmopolitan character. The security and freedom enjoyed at Amsterdam had attracted Jews from different parts, especially from Catholic Christendom and from the German states, which were at that time devastated by the Thirty Years' War. One consequence of this circumstance was that the colony became a polyglot community. Owing to commercial pursuits and to the migratory habits occasioned by varying persecutions, the Jews in general were the best linguists of the time. Those dwelling at Amsterdam had peculiar opportunities and incentives for acquiring languages. It has been noted that Manasseh ben Isreal was acquainted with ten. Most of his colleagues doubtless knew something

of five or six. All educated persons were supposed to have learned several. Of the dead languages, Latin was especially cultivated. It was very natural therefore that Spinoza, a capable and aspiring youth, should devote some attention to several languages and should undertake a thorough mastery of Latin. In Greek he never became proficient. His studies in Latin were begun under a German teacher, whose name has not come down to us, and were continued and completed under a certain Francis van den Ende, a physician and scholar, who was interested in the natural sciences and had a reputation both for skill as a teacher and for free-thinking. In how far the report that he was a free-thinker was justified, we are unable to determine. That he was an efficient teacher, we may infer from the fact that under him Spinoza soon learned to write a Latin style which, though not faultless, was concise and clear, quite adequate to the expression of his thought. It was the language in which he afterward did all his thinking and composed all his works.

There exists a story that, while Spinoza was receiving instruction from Van den Ende, he fell in love with his master's daughter Clara Maria, and that in his wooing he was defeated by a rival who won the girl's affection with the potent charms of a pearl necklace. Data are now at hand which show that Clara was then a child of only eleven or twelve years. If Spinoza ever wooed her, it must have been later; but of this there is also no tangible evidence. The whole story has the appearance of one of those old wives' fables which the historian may ignore.[1]

[1] But compare Freudenthal I, pp. 41-42; Meinsma, p. 141; Martineau, p. 25; Pollock, p. 13.

With the acquisition of Latin, at this time the universal language of scholars, a new world was opened to Spinoza; and he must have entered it without delay. His studies in mathematics, physics, mechanics, astronomy, chemistry, and medicine, probably date from this period. In philosophy he must now have become acquainted with Aristotle, the Stoics, the Neo-Platonists of the Renaissance, Francis Bacon, Hobbes, and Descartes, with all of whom his writings show more or less familiarity. To Descartes in particular, who ultimately had more influence upon his thinking than did all others, he certainly devoted at this time very careful study.

This is all we know of Spinoza up to his twenty-fourth year. It should be noted that, so far as is known, he had not yet manifested any special religious interest. Morteira is said to have praised him for his mental acuteness, but no one is known to have remarked upon his piety. The assumption that, in his youth, he was of a religious disposition seems to rest on nothing better than the two sentimental grounds: (1) that he, like religious reformers, was persecuted, and (2) that he was a Jew, the Jews being supposed by some to be endowed by nature with an inalienable "religiousness."

### 4. *Rupture with the Synagogue.*

In the meantime young Spinoza had begun to excite the suspicion of the Elders of the Synagogue. It is said he expressed too freely opinions of his own, and was not sufficiently strict in his observance of all the ceremonies. It began to look as though he

would get into trouble, unless he were more guarded in his conversation and conduct; for we have now to note with disappointment that the hunted victims of religious intolerance had not themselves learned toleration. Spinoza's position seemed all the more precarious, as the Jewish church had severely dealt with one heretic already. Uriel da Costa, for this was his name, was born of "New Christian" parents, and had been brought up as a Catholic in Spain. Breaking away from Christianity, he had fled from Oporto to Amsterdam, where he had joined the Jewish congregation. But he soon came into conflict with his new environment also, maintaining that the Pentateuch was of human origin, rejecting the doctrine of immortality and the validity of the ceremonial law, and advocating natural religion as a substitute for Judaism. On account of these views, he was promptly excommunicated by the Synagogue. He remained under the ban for fifteen years, when, remarking that "among monkeys he would be a monkey too," he renounced his heresies and was reconciled to the religious organization. But he soon relapsed; and seven years later, in order to be re-admitted to the fellowship of his brethren, submitted to thirty-nine stripes, and, prostrating himself on the threshold of the Synagogue, suffered the congregation to pass over his body. Not long afterwards, he put an end to his unhappy life by suicide. He was no doubt a sort of freak, unbalanced in mind, and unstable in character; but the humiliations to which he was subjected showed Spinoza, who could remember his fate, that no heretic could expect any consideration at the hands of the Elders.

While trouble between him and the religious authorities was brewing, Spinoza had occasion, possibly on account of unkind treatment, to leave his now almost empty home, and to take up his abode for a time with a friend, possibly Van den Ende, whom he would have been able to assist in his school. As he now claimed his share of the inheritance, his half-sister and the widower of his deceased sister Miriam conspired to deprive him of his rights. After he had compelled them through the courts to give him his due, he voluntarily relinquished his claim to everything except a "very good" bed. What motives prompted him to this act, we are unable to determine. A desire to help his hard-hearted and undeserving half-sister, would not have been consistent with his subsequent habit of spending all his income, avowedly in order to prevent his kindred from inheriting anything. It may be that at this time there was nothing else left to which he attached any particular value; especially as he was already more interested in knowledge than in possessions.

Of the events that led to the actual rupture with the Synagogue in Spinoza's twenty-fourth year, we have no reliable account. There exists a story that when the Elders discovered Spinoza's state of mind, they promised him an annuity of one thousand florins, provided he would continue to conform to Judaism and would hold his tongue. This improbable story seems to be based on an *on-dit* reported by Bayle, and the testimony (recorded by the uncritical Colerus) of the artist Van der Spyck, one of Spinoza's subsequent hosts, whose creative imagination was not always confined to producing pic-

tures.[1] If Spinoza was destined for the rabbinical office, as some suppose, we can understand how the sacrifice of future salary involved in his apostasy may have given rise to the story. It is related likewise that about this time religious fanaticism in the person of an unknown enemy attempted to plunge a dagger into Spinoza's heart one evening as he left the synagogue, or, according to one version, the theatre. But this story has a mythical complexion also.[2]

In dealing with Spinoza, the Elders probably admonished him first, and then visited him with the lower degree of excommunication, which excluded him from the Society for thirty days. When this proved fruitless, the final sentence of the Synagogue was pronounced against him on the 27th of July, 1656. It was expressed in the Portuguese language, and has been translated as follows:[3]

"The chiefs of the council do you to wit, that having long known the evil opinions and works of Baruch de Espinoza, they have endeavored by divers ways and promises to withdraw him from his evil ways, and they are unable to find a remedy, but on the contrary have had every day more knowledge of the abominable heresies practised and taught by him, and of other enormities committed by him, and have of this many trustworthy witnesses who have deposed and borne witness in the presence of the said Espinoza, and by whom he stood convicted; all which having been examined in

[1] For some of the mistakes of Colerus, based on the testimony of Van der Spyck, see Freudenthal's "Spinoza, etc.," Vol. I, p. 320. This particular incident Freudenthal is willing to regard as historical. Vide op. cit. I, p. 68.

[2] Cf. Freudenthal, I, p. 69.

[3] Pollock's "Spinoza," p. 17.

the presence of the elders, it has been determined with their assent that the said Espinoza should be excommunicated and cut off from the nation of Israel; and now he is hereby excommunicated with the following anathema:

"With the judgment of the angels and of the saints we excommunicate, cut off, curse, and anathematize Baruch de Espinoza, with the consent of the elders and of all this holy congregation, in the presence of the holy books: by the 613 precepts which are written therein, with the anathema wherewith Joshua cursed Jericho, with the curse which Elisha laid upon the children, and with all the curses which are written in the law. Cursed be he by day and cursed be he by night. Cursed be he in sleeping and cursed be he in waking, cursed in going out and cursed in coming in. The Lord shall not pardon him, the wrath and fury of the Lord shall henceforth be kindled against this man, and shall lay upon him all the curses which are written in the book of the law. The Lord shall destroy his name under the sun, and cut him off for his undoing from all the tribes of Israel, with all the curses of the firmament which are written in the book of the law. But ye that cleave unto the Lord your God, live all of you this day.

"And we warn you, that none may speak with him by word of mouth nor by writing, nor show any favor to him, nor be under one roof with him, nor come within four cubits of him, nor read any paper composed or written by him."

This is certainly a terrible curse. It should be observed, however, that it was not one specially invented for Spinoza. It was a general formula which the Synagogue only applied to the particular case before them.

It would be easy to misapprehend the nature and significance of Spinoza's excommunication. We should not forget that the Jewish congregation was a voluntary association, and, like all such, it had a

perfect right to define for itself the conditions of admission and dismission. Under the circumstances, the mere expulsion of Spinoza can hardly be called persecution; but to let loose such an avalanche of curses upon his head was to go beyond mere expulsion, and must be characterized as, at best, extreme religious fanaticism.

The effects of this anathema have often been exaggerated. It has generally been assumed that it entailed practical consequences of a very serious nature. But many things tend to show that in fact it did him little harm. It cannot be regarded as a hardship to forego the society of those with whom one no longer possesses anything in common. Indeed Spinoza had already decided to sever his connection with the Synagogue, when the excommunication saved him the trouble of taking the initiative. Moreover, to be cast out by the despised Jews, on account of dissent from their views, could at first only commend him to the favor of the rest of the community. Even the rending of family ties could not have been a matter of serious importance. His father, his own mother, his stepmother, and his sister Miriam were already dead. Only one member of the family remained, his half-sister Rebecca; and her attempt to rob him of his share in the father's estate, would indicate that he had nothing to lose in her. Besides, he had already formed new associations that were much more congenial than the old. But after all qualifications have been made, it must still be recognized that the experience through which he passed at this time could not have been a pleasant one, especially for a person of Spinoza's disposition.

To the act of excommunication Spinoza felt called upon to publish a reply, which is no longer extant.

Lucas, an early but more or less untrustworthy biographer, relates that the chiefs of the Synagogue finally induced the Reformed clergy to unite with them in demanding Spinoza's banishment, and that the civil authorities, yielding to the pressure, actually expelled him from the city. The story lacks confirmation, and, in view of all the circumstances, seems to us very improbable.[1]

Of Spinoza's movements and whereabouts during the next few years, we have no certain knowledge; but it seems probable that he remained in and about Amsterdam. To the number of friends and acquaintances he had already acquired here, were now added others, especially from among the Collegiants and Mennonites.

The Collegiants, or Rijnsburgers, are generally believed to have been a branch of the "Remonstrants," a name applied originally to those Dutch

[1] Pollock (p. 19) is disposed to regard the incident as historical. Freudenthal likewise (I, p. 81). Martineau (p. 38) states the opposite view as follows: "This story, unsupported by personal or documentary evidence, has every internal mark of fiction. The Amsterdam magistrates were eminent for their firm guardianship of every citizen's rights. No law can be cited under which the alleged charge could be brought. If it existed, it would give the clergy no voice in the case, but must be executed by the civil power. The alleged offence included no overt act of public speech or writing, and was evidenced only by the hearsay of private conversation. And the sentence is said to have been passed by a tribunal conscious of its injustice." To these considerations should be added (what Martineau did not know) that Casearius, Spinoza's private pupil of some years later, was a theological student of the Reformed Church. This fact would indicate that Spinoza was not even then generally suspected of having cast off religion as such, and was not yet seriously distrusted by the Christian clergy.

Protestants who, after the death of Arminius, continued to maintain the views associated with his name, and in 1610 presented to the states of Holland and Friesland a "remonstrance" formulating the points in which they departed from the stricter Calvinism. The strife that followed issued in the complete victory of the stricter view at the Synod of Dort, which placed the "Remonstrants" under the ban. Deprived of their pastors, they conceived the possibility of getting on without a regular ministry. Accordingly they instituted meetings that ignored all ecclesiastical forms and distinctions. They were bound by no definite creed, although they generally assumed that belief in the authority of the Scriptures and in Christ as, in some sense, the Redeemer, was essential to religion. They welcomed, it is said, even Roman Catholics on the one hand and Socinians (Unitarians) on the other. Instead of ceremonies, ecclesiastical relations, and metaphysical doctrines, they emphasized right living as the only important element in religion. In many respects they resembled the Mennonites, an older sect, and were finally absorbed by them. These likewise dispensed with a regular ministry, held simple beliefs, and laid the chief stress upon a right spirit and right conduct. But the bonds of sympathy between the members were not exclusively religious; they were in great part political. And it is important to note that among both sects were found liberal-minded men; that in fact many secularists and radical free-thinkers who had no religious interest were included under those names.

Of Spinoza's friends at this time the most important were the Mennonites: Peter Balling, Jarig

Jelles, Simon de Vries, and Jan Rieuwertsz; and the physicians: Lodewijk Meyer and Dirck Kerckring. They all possessed considerable interest in knowledge, while Balling, Jelles, Meyer, and Kerckring became writers of note, though of no originality.

Spinoza's association with persons belonging to these sects has been interpreted as an evidence of strong religious interest. "The more devoutly he had been attached to the religious ideas of his own people," says his latest biographer, "the more painful must have been the void he felt, as they gradually paled before his eyes and finally appeared as mere illusions. For everything his faith had lost [in Judaism] he looked for a compensation in Christianity."[1] And Spinoza's association with Mennonites and Collegiants was prompted, he thinks, by a religious desire to obtain from pious-minded men a more intimate knowledge of Christianity. Of course this is only a conjecture. We have no knowledge of Spinoza's spiritual experience at this time or earlier. We cannot say even that he had ever been "devoutly" attached to the religious ideas of his own people, if by this we mean that those ideas satisfied deeply-felt religious needs. That he was drawn into relations with sectarians by a religious interest in Christianity, is an unwarrantable assumption. It is certain, on the contrary, that if at this time his fundamental views, as seems extremely probable, resembled those expounded in the earliest records of his thought, his rupture with Judaism resulted from a repudiation of the primary religious postulates which Judaism and Christianity have in common; and hence that

[1] Freudenthal, I, p. 64.

when he abandoned the one he could not have hoped to find satisfaction in the other. Spinoza was not seeking another "faith;" he had already passed beyond faith. What attracted him was not any supposed light they could give him on religious problems; but rather "their fraternal union, their tolerance amid intolerance, and not least the political fidelity they had shown to the wise and heroic upholders of the Republic."[1] In short, the bonds of sympathy between Spinoza and the sectaries in question were, so far as we can judge, in no wise religious, but ethical and above all political. The sects constituted political forces which could be relied upon to support the government against intolerant demands of the Reformed clergy; and hence stood for liberty of conscience, a cause in which Spinoza had the greatest interest, both theoretical and practical. Accordingly Spinoza turned to the Collegiants and Mennonites as his natural allies and protectors. As regards religion, he agreed with them only in their negations; in their rejection of ceremonialism and ecclesiasticism, in their opposition to intolerance, and in their distrust of the Reformed clergy.

In the meantime, in order to be able to maintain himself, Spinoza had learned the art of polishing lenses. This occupation he seems to have chosen before others because of its relation to the science of optics, and because of Descartes' example. He soon became skilled in his art, and easily sold through his friends a sufficient number to enable him to defray the expenses of his frugal life.

[1] Martineau, p. 19.

While in and about Amsterdam, he doubtless spent most of his time in reading and thinking, and in conferences with his young friends. It seems probable that before leaving this place he composed his first work, the "Short Treatise on God and Man and his Well-being,"[1] and that he either left it in the hands of his friends on his departure or sent it back to them soon afterward. It was not intended for publication, but for circulation among his friends in manuscript. Both in form and substance it contains many crudities which stamp it as his earliest composition. It is characterized by a profusion of religious expressions for conceptions that he emptied of all religious meaning; a circumstance which is no doubt to be explained by the fact that his friends and others into whose hands the manuscript might fall, although open-minded, must have been still more or less bound to the religious ideas in which they had been nurtured. In doctrine it reveals the same general point of view as we find in his later works, although very important differences in the details of his system. Originally composed in Latin, it was soon translated into Dutch by one of his friends, and afterwards lost to view entirely. Its existence was not suspected by scholars until 1852, when Edward Böhmer of Halle found an abstract appended to a copy of Köhler's "Biography of Spinoza." This soon led to the discovery of Dutch translations, but no copy of the original has yet come to light.

[1] Freudenthal thinks this work was composed chiefly, if not wholly, after leaving Amsterdam. Op. cit., p. 105.

### 5. *Sojourn in Rijnsburg.*

From Amsterdam Spinoza moved to Rijnsburg, a village near Leiden, probably in the year 1660. He is said to have accompanied thither a Collegiant friend with whom he had lived some time in Ouwerkerk near Amsterdam. Rijnsburg was an important centre for Collegiants, so important in fact that they were commonly called Rijnsburgers. Here Spinoza spent two or three of the most important years of his life.

From a letter written to Oldenburg toward the end of 1661,[1] we learn that he had already been occupied for an indefinite time with a work, "*de intellectus emendatione,*" which can have been nothing else of course than the unfinished treatise that has come down to us with this title. His reflections and investigations had evidently caused him to feel the need of working out more definitely his theory of knowledge and of clarifying his ideas in regard to logical method. The work represents his studies in these subjects. As we have it, the fragment occupies but thirty-seven printed pages. From the preface to his "Posthumous Works," written by Lodewijk Meyer, who probably knew whereof he spoke, we learn that the difficulties encountered retarded the progress of the work, and even prevented its completion. Apparently influenced by Descartes' "Discours de la Méthode," he introduces his subject in the form of a narration of personal experience in search of the *summum bonum.* His language in this part has often been regarded as that of a profoundly religious nature. In another

[1] Ep. 6, p. 217.

connection we shall have occasion to quote and examine the most significant passages.

In the meantime Spinoza had begun to give private instruction in Descartes' philosophy to a young theological student called Johannes Casearius, who temporarily took lodgings in the same house. This name was formerly thought to be a pseudonym for Albert Burgh,[1] a subsequent convert to Roman Catholicism of whom we shall have a word to say later. The fact that a student of theology belonging to the Reformed Church chose Spinoza as instructor in philosophy is significant as showing that Spinoza was not yet regarded with much, if any, suspicion outside of the Jewish community. The theological prepossessions of his pupil Spinoza found a source of irritation and distrust, and he did not feel free to disclose his real opinions. He therefore confined himself to a pretty faithful reproduction of the doctrines of Descartes; in a few cases even supporting with arguments of his own the views he himself did not accept. In metaphysics he followed the more recent scholastics rather than Descartes, but frequently treated scholastic doctrines in a way to expose their invalidity without expressly rejecting them. It was evidently his desire cautiously to plant in his pupil's mind the seeds of conversion to his own views. It is worth noting that Johannes Casearius became in later years an efficient minister of the Reformed Church and also a botanist of recognized merit.

When Spinoza's friends at Amsterdam learned that he had written an outline of the second part

[1] Meinsma has set the matter right. Vide op. cit., pp. 182-190.

of Descartes' "Principia" with added "Metaphysical Thoughts," they urged him to make a similar abstract of the first part, and to publish the whole. This he consented to do, on condition that some one would improve the style and write a preface explaining that in many particulars the "Metaphysical Thoughts" did not represent his real opinions. The work appeared in 1663 under the title "Renati des Cartes principiorum philosophiae Pars I et II, More Geometrico demonstratae per Benedictum de Spinoza Amstelodamensem. Accesserunt Ejusdem Cogitata metaphysica." The author himself probably regarded it as of little importance, and in this estimate we must concur; but the contemporaneous public in Holland and Germany received it with great favor. He had unexpectedly made for himself a name.

In the meantime he had also begun his greatest work, the "Ethics." Early in the year 1663, as we learn from a letter by Simon de Vries,[1] a portion, if not all, of the "First Part" was in the hands of his friends in Amsterdam. The work so early begun remained on his table many years, and was not completed until 1675. In form it is modeled after works on geometry. Starting from a body of axioms and definitions assumed to be self-evident, it proceeds by propositions, demonstrations, and corollaries from one point to another until the preconceived goal has been reached. The form in which his argumentation is cast gives it the appearance of correctness; and, as the difficulty of following the tangled threads of his abstract reasoning has generally discouraged serious study of the work,

[1] Epis. 8 (olim 26).

it has enjoyed the quite unwarranted reputation of being a master-piece of iron logic.

Spinoza's friends in Amsterdam had already organized themselves into a kind of club for the study of his philosophy. It was their custom to read and discuss together parts of his writings, and then by letter ask Spinoza himself for further light on whatever remained unclear. Spinoza's replies constitute an important source of our knowledge of his thought.

It was during his sojourn in Rijnsburg that he was visited by Henry Oldenburg, secretary of the recently founded Royal Society of London. On a journey through Holland and Germany in 1661, the Secretary heard of the promising young philosopher, and sought him out in his retreat at Rijnsburg. Judging from the letter written soon afterward, which opened a long and fruitful correspondence, Oldenburg must have been charmed not only with Spinoza's evident gifts of intellect, but with his personality also.

### 6. *Sojourn at Voorburg.*

In the spring of 1663 Spinoza moved from Rijnsburg to Voorburg, a suburb of The Hague. His motive in this may have been the desire not only to avoid the many interruptions to which he was subjected by visitors, but also to draw nearer to influential acquaintances connected with the Government. For he had already attracted the attention and won the good-will of some of the great political leaders of the time, among others, the Grand Pensionary Jan de Witt.

Here his time was spent in conferences and correspondence with eminent men, in scientific and philosophical studies, and in grinding lenses. Two works in particular now claimed his attention, the "Ethics" and the "Theologico-Political Treatise." The first part of the "Ethics," as we have seen, was virtually completed before he left Rijnsburg. The work was continued at Voorburg, and we have good reasons to suppose was nearing completion in the year 1665, when he suddenly laid it aside not to take it up again for nearly ten years. He had decided to devote himself for the time to the preparation of a book on the relation of Church and State, entitled "A Theologico-Political Treatise."

To this step he was moved, it seems, both by the trend of public events and by certain personal considerations. A conflict between Church and State was raging, in which the Reformed clergy made the most of public calamities (a plague and military reverses), in order to overthrow De Witt. At the same time they redoubled their efforts to secure legal restraints on freedom of thought; and had already gained important successes. In 1662 the states of Friesland had banished on pain of penal servitude those "servants of the Devil" known as Quakers, Mennonites, and Socinians; and in 1664 the magistrates of Amsterdam forbade the Mennonites to preach doctrines that "smack of Socinian heresies." In the midst of this revival of clericalism Spinoza became alarmed and annoyed by indications that he himself was now generally suspected of atheism. In the year 1665 the community in which he lived had occasion to elect a new pastor of the Reformed Church, and there de-

veloped a strife between the liberals and the orthodox. Spinoza's host, as leader of the liberals, had petitioned the competent authority in favor of a certain candidate known to be a liberal. The orthodox were scandalized of course, and in the heat of controversy called the petition "the work of a certain Spinoza, a Jew by birth, who is an atheist, a scoffer, and a bad subject in this Republic, as many learned men and ministers can testify." It was in these circumstances that Spinoza conceived the purpose of writing his "Theologico-Political Treatise."

According to the author, the specific aim of the work was: (1) To expose the prejudices of theologians which hinder men from applying themselves to philosophy, and even to remove these prejudices from the minds of the more reasonable among them; (2) As far as possible, to convince the people that he was no atheist, as they seemed to suppose; (3) To demonstrate the right to think what one pleases, and to say what one thinks.[1] By the prejudices of theologians he meant their belief in the Bible as an authoritative revelation of metaphysical truth; and their consequent opposition to all thought calculated to invalidate biblical doctrines. It was his intention to show that the only important and valid element in biblical teaching is the ethical one, namely its inculcation of "justice and charity" in our relation to our fellow men. If by subjecting the Bible to thorough criticism he could make this appear, theologians would no longer be able to justify their distrust of the freest philosophical and

[1] Epis. 30.

scientific inquiries, since these have to do not with moral practices, but with theoretical opinions.

It will be observed that one of the declared objects of the work was to win to his view not only the public in general, but even the more reasonable among the theologians themselves. Another object was to show the people that he was not irreligious. The author's consciousness of these two incidental aims resulted in his producing one of the most puzzling books ever written. When thinking of open-minded theologians, he endeavors to present his novel ideas in a way least calculated to shock them, often making large concessions to their point of view; and when in addition he remembers his obligation to refute the charge of atheism, he goes still further and almost hides himself in religious phraseology. These aims were in fact incompatible with his theoretical point of view, and in so far his book failed to fulfil its mission; for it neither made converts of theologians nor removed the popular suspicion of atheism. But in spite of its peculiarities, the thoroughness, learning, and spirit of Spinoza's "Theologico-Political Treatise" require us to rank it with the ablest works in biblical criticism and with the noblest apologies of free speech. We shall have occasion to quote it at length.

While at Voorburg Spinoza's income was increased by a life-annuity fixed upon him by Simon de Vries. This enthusiastic admirer and devoted friend had at one time desired to present him with 2,000 gulden, but the offer was refused on the ground that it was not needed. Later he proposed to pass over his own brother and to make Spinoza

heir to all his property; but this Spinoza considered unjust. In the end De Vries left his estate to his brother, with the proviso that he pay Spinoza an annuity of 500 gulden. Of this Spinoza consented to accept only 300 gulden; a sum which he probably regarded as sufficient, though barely sufficient, to meet the demands of his simple life. At an unknown date De Witt also assigned him a pension of 200 gulden, which was continued after the benefactor's death. The two sources of income combined must have rendered him well-nigh independent of his handicraft.

In the meantime the number of Spinoza's friends and acquaintances had considerably increased. Among those of political influence we have already mentioned the Grand Pensionary Jan de Witt, who befriended him until his violent death in 1672. Another of this class was the Burgomaster Johan Hudde of Amsterdam. One of the scholars with whom he had come into close relations was a distinguished scientist of the time, Christiaan Huygens, who lived at The Hague from 1664 to 1666. He was especially interested in Spinoza's skill in grinding lenses. Through Oldenburg, secretary of The Royal Society, Spinoza had also come into remote relations with Robert Boyle and others in England. An acquaintance of quite a different type was a certain Willem van Blyenbergh, a grain-broker of Dort, who devoted his leisure to studies in theology and philosophy. His interest in knowledge hardly measured up to what philosophers demand of a thinker, inasmuch as he permitted "revelation" to set bounds to his inquiries. For

this reason writers on Spinoza have treated Blyenbergh with even more contempt than he deserves. Spinoza's exposition of Descartes' "Principia" had fallen into his hands, and he had read it repeatedly, each time with increased pleasure, but still found certain parts unintelligible. He therefore took the liberty of writing to the author himself for explanations, at the same time professing supreme devotion to the cause of "pure and sincere truth." Spinoza naturally supposed he had found a man after his own heart, and wrote him a frank and friendly reply. But Blyenbergh was more puzzled than ever; Spinoza's reasoning seemed to contradict the primary postulates of theology. At the very beginning of his next letter, therefore, the amateur philosopher declared that "the revealed word of God" constituted for him one criterion of truth. Alas! the new-found truth-seeker was after all only a theologian! Spinoza saw his mistake; but his natural complaisance constrained him to continue the correspondence. Several letters were exchanged, and even a personal conference held; but all this served only to bring out more clearly the irreconcilable difference between the two points of view. Finally Spinoza's patience gave way, and he terminated their relation by frankly writing the importunate friend that further correspondence would be unprofitable. A few years later, Blyenbergh published an alleged refutation of "the blasphemous book entitled 'A Theologico-political Treatise;'" and after Spinoza's death he again appeared in print, this time as an unsympathetic, and also incompetent, critic of the "Ethics."

As Spinoza's sojourn at Voorburg was nearing its end, the unhappy fate of a friend[1] of his must have caused him no little disquietude. Two brothers, John and Adrian Koerbagh, the former a student of theology, the latter of medicine and jurisprudence, had expressed themselves disparagingly of the Bible, the Catechism, the doctrine of the Trinity, and other matters; and in 1666 were summoned before the Church authorities. On the evidence heard, John was debarred from the ministry; but, as he promptly recanted, he was restored to his previous standing. A year later he was before the Church again, and in 1668 was thrown into prison, from which he was released, after ten weeks, on promising good behavior for the future. But as he was not yet cured of his heresies, as in fact he proved to be incurable, he was finally declared unworthy to fill the pastoral office. His brother Adrian seems to have been a man of more consequence. His offense consisted in having written two books entitled, "A Flower-Garden" and "Light in Dark Places," in which he had attacked the principal dogmas of the Church. His case was prejudiced not only by his wantonly offensive manner, but also by immoral teachings and practices. In the course of the trial Spinoza's name was mentioned, but Koerbagh asserted that Spinoza was in no way responsible for his teachings. In the face of imminent punishment his courage failed, as had that of his brother, and he professed to repent of his errors. It is indicative of how fiercely the spirit

[1] Cf. Freudenthal's "Spinoza," Vol. I, p. 140, and Meinsma, op. cit., p. 272.

of the Middle Ages still burned in the hearts of some, or at least of how it still lingered in the forms of law, that an officer of the court at first moved to send the culprit to prison for thirty years, to cut off his right thumb, and to bore his tongue through with a hot iron. The punishment to which he was actually condemned (July, 1668) was ten years of imprisonment at hard labor, ten years banishment, and a fine of 6,000 gulden. After a little more than one year of imprisonment, he was liberated by a welcome death.

In judging those who pronounced this sentence, we need to remember that the culprit was condemned not merely for teaching novel religious doctrines, but also for sowing the seeds of immorality; and that the free-thinking Burgomaster Johan Hudde approved the sentence. Indeed, it has been argued that even Spinoza could not have considered it unjust.[1]

### 7. *At The Hague.*

In the year 1670 Spinoza transferred his residence from Voorburg, a suburb of The Hague, to the city itself. In the Veerkade, a quiet street, he engaged one room of the widow Van Velen, who was to provide him with his meals also; but, as living-expenses in the Capital were much greater than in Voorburg, he soon found his slender means insufficient for so much comfort. In May 1671, therefore, he moved into new quarters on the near-by Paviljoensgracht, in the house of the painter Van der Spyck. The apartment consisted of two rooms

[1] Freudenthal, "Spinoza," I, p. 145; cf. note p. 333 and p. 179.

on the second floor, and cost him eighty gulden a year. In order to live within his means, and perhaps also to give his impaired health the benefit of the greatest liberty in the choice of diet, he now prepared his own meals. From Van der Spyck the early biographers of Spinoza obtained, years afterward, many facts, and, it seems, some fictions also, in regard to the life of the philosopher.

The "Theologico-Political Treatise," as we have seen, was already finished. In accordance with his principles and habits, he now proceeded with the utmost caution to arrange for its publication. His customary prudence had not been diminished by the recent fate of his friend Adrian Koerbagh; although the punishment of this restless agitator hardly indicated that Spinoza's life or liberty was in danger. The two cases were quite different. Koerbagh was an immoral teacher of immorality; Spinoza a blameless teacher of virtue. Koerbagh wrote in the vernacular, and propagated his views orally among the common people; Spinoza wrote in Latin for the learned and spared the feelings of pious illiteracy. Koerbagh wantonly employed shocking and provoking language; Spinoza generally sought to express his views in the least offensive form possible. But whether for sufficient reason or not, Spinoza took every precaution against evil consequences by omitting his own name and that of the publisher, and by substituting Henricus Künrath in Hamburg instead of Christoffel Koenrads in Amsterdam, the real name and place of the printer. The work appeared in the first part of the year 1670 (possibly before he actually settled in The Hague), and was soon attributed to the right

author. Cries of execration greeted it on every side. As early as July of the same year voices were heard even from Germany denouncing the "baleful" and "godless" book. A number of refutations appeared, the ablest of which was perhaps that written in 1671 by Lambert van Velthuysen, the scholar, jurist, and statesman. His imputation of atheism alarmed and deeply stung Spinoza; for had not one express aim of the "Treatise" been to purge the author's name of that taint? Spinoza's reply to the charge consisted in an appeal to his manner of life: Atheists chase after honors and excessive riches, which he had always despised. His words will claim our attention in another place.

In the meantime the ministers of the Reformed Church had bestirred themselves to prevent both the further circulation of this book and the publication of others by the same author. Synods and church councils vied with one another in denouncing it as blasphemous and dangerous, and in demanding its suppression by the civil authorities; but as long as Jan de Witt directed the affairs of state they failed to obtain their desire. Under William III. of the House of Orange, however, who found it expedient to ally himself with the clergy, the States-General of Holland issued an edict (July, 1674) forbidding the sale of the "Theologico-Political Treatise" along with certain other heretical books. Alarmed by the hostility provoked, Spinoza himself had already interfered (1671) to prevent a Dutch translation, which would have made the contents of the book accessible to the general public.[1] For all this hostility he must have been

[1] Epis. 44 (olim 47).

compensated in a measure by the noise his work had made in the world and by its rapid sale. In a few years not less than five reprints of the first edition appeared, some of them, to be sure, under false titles, as "The Surgical Works of Dr. Franziskus Henriquez de Villacorta," "Collection of the Historical Writings of Daniel Heinsius," etc

While the storm was raging in the world around him, Spinoza sat in his study revising and completing his "Ethics," which had been discontinued years before in order to write the "Theologico-Political Treatise." The circumstance that the last part of the "Ethics" was composed under these conditions may not be overlooked, if one will rightly estimate its significance. He had freely employed religious language in an accommodated sense in the "Theologico-Political Treatise," hoping thereby to prevent the impression that he was hostile to religion; but he had failed of his purpose. In the last part of the "Ethics," composed when his ears were ringing with the charges of atheism, he carries further than ever his policy of clothing non-religious conceptions in the phraseology of religion.

In July, 1675, just one year after the "Theologico-Political Treatise" had been proscribed, Spinoza betook himself to Amsterdam with the finished manuscript of his new work for the purpose of arranging for its publication; but he found to his dismay that a rumor of the projected publication had already gone abroad, and that certain theologians were ready to make complaint against him to the Prince of Orange and the Government. Moreover, the Cartesians, jealous of their hard-won and precarious exemption from persecution, were seek-

ing to maintain their respectability and security by loudly repudiating Spinoza's doctrines and by joining in active opposition to them. In the circumstances he decided to defer indefinitely the publication of the work; and in consequence it was not given to the press until after his death. Whether in this matter he was governed by excessive timidity or only by justifiable prudence, is a question about which there will be differences of opinion. It is to be noted, in any case, that all the opposition he had thus far encountered was directed against his writings, and not against himself. No resolutions of church councils and no measures taken by the civil authorities contemplated violence to his person. Whether he possessed grounds unknown to us for fearing real persecution can not be determined.

In the midst of hostile demonstrations from his immediate environment, he received (1673), a notable testimony to his reputation and a gratifying expression of confidence through a call to a chair of philosophy in the University of Heidelberg by the Elector Palatine Karl Ludwig. This enlightened Prince proposed to allow him full liberty of teaching, with one fatal reservation: he should not assail the dogmas of the established church. In this restriction Spinoza saw the possibility of infinite trouble. After brief deliberation, therefore, he respectfully declined the offer. This act has been represented as an evidence of his divine indifference to honors, position, and riches. We pay more respect to his sanity when we attribute his refusal simply to the plain dictates of common sense. The chances were a hundred to one that the position

would at once cost him his independence and his peace of mind, and ultimately cause him to be sacrificed to offended bigotry. He understood this very well, and hence wisely declined the appointment.

In the meantime Spinoza's great patron, Jan de Witt, had met with a tragic fate. An unexpected invasion of Holland by a French army in 1672 had found the Republic's military organization quite unprepared to make effectual resistance. The indignant citizens naturally cast all the blame on the strong man who had, perhaps in too arbitrary a spirit, assumed supreme control of the government. His downfall promptly followed. On the 27th of August, when visiting his imprisoned brother Cornelius, an infuriated mob broke into the prison, dragged forth the unhappy pair and beat them to death in the streets. When Spinoza learned what had happened, he lost his wonted composure, and (according to Lucas) burst into tears of indignation and grief. Spinoza afterwards told Leibnitz (so the latter recounts) that in the night following the murder he wished to post in the streets a placard bearing the words "*Ultimi barbarorum*!", but was prevented by Van der Spyck, who locked the doors of the house.

The invading French army was commanded by Prince Condé. While occupying the city of Utrecht, this Maecenas was reminded by Jean Baptiste Stouppe, a Swiss officer under him, that Spinoza dwelt not far away. Curious to see the famous author of the "Theologico-Political Treatise," he commissioned Stouppe to write Spinoza in his name inviting him to Utrecht. After some hesitation Spinoza decided to go. His reasons for doing so

are not known, but it has been suggested that, after consultation with men of the Government, he accepted the invitation in hope of rendering some service to Holland. On his arrival, Condé being absent from the city, he was received with every attention by Stouppe and the Duke of Luxemburg, and was induced to remain several weeks awaiting the return of the Prince. When word came that the latter could not come again to Utrecht, Spinoza departed at once for The Hague. Colerus, who obtained his information later from Spinoza's not very reliable host, relates that on his return Spinoza was in danger of being maltreated by the populace, which suspected him of treasonable relations with the enemies of his country; and that his host was afraid the house would be taken by storm. Nothing is known of an actually assembled mob, and we are unable to say whether there was any real danger or not.

In his modest apartment at The Hague Spinoza had the privilege of receiving many distinguished visitors, the most noteworthy of whom were the Swedish Chancellor Greiffencranz, the jurist Pufendorf, and the philosopher Leibnitz. Leibnitz's repeated visits possess particular interest, inasmuch as he was the only philosopher of equal rank with whom Spinoza came into personal relations. Courtier and politician as well as philosopher, Leibnitz never succeeded in winning Spinoza's confidence; although he became a careful and, at one time, it seems, a sympathetic student of Spinoza's philosophy. Later he was willing to minimize his connections with the "atheist" and to ignore his indebtedness to him.

To the already numerous company of friends and disciples Spinoza had now added several new names. Among those who have not hitherto been mentioned were the son and namesake of his publisher, Jan Rieuwertsz, the physician Jean Maximilien Lucas, who afterward wrote a biography of the philosopher, and the three correspondents: Hugo Boxel, Herman Schuller, and Walter von Tschirnhaus. Tschirnhaus was the most important. Though not an original thinker, he was a sharp critic, and in his letters made some unanswerable objections, as we shall see, to certain points in Spinoza's philosophy.

It was during this period that Spinoza received an astonishing letter from a former pupil, Albert Burgh by name, who was then travelling in Italy. It conveyed the news that his pupil had become a communicant of the Roman Catholic Church, and it undertook to convert Spinoza to the same faith. "Do not refuse [to be converted]," it concluded, "for if you do not now heed the calls of God, his wrath will be kindled against you, and there is danger of your being abandoned by his infinite mercy and of your becoming a miserable victim of the all-consuming divine justice." The youth's well-meant arguments and ardent exhortations—which bear the marks of his father confessor—provoked a sharp and indignant reply, which is of interest chiefly as evidencing the depth of Spinoza's philosophical convictions. "You ask me," he says, "how I know that my philosophy is the best of all those that have been taught in the world, are now taught, or ever will be taught; which question I have a much better right to ask you. For I do not assume to have

found the best philosophy, but I know I comprehend the true philosophy."

Spinoza lived at The Hague seven years. In this period his literary productiveness was not commensurate with that of the preceding years. The fact was perhaps due to failing health. The "Theologico-Political Treatise" had been completed and the "Ethics" brought well nigh to a conclusion before he left Voorburg. Nothing written at The Hague is comparable with either. As the literary fruit of this considerable period we have only the notes to the "Theologico-Political Treatise," a short essay on the rainbow, a fragment of a "Compendium of a Grammar of the Hebrew Language," and an unfinished work entitled "A Political Treatise."

He had now reached the forty-fourth year of his age. Though still a comparatively young man, his physical constitution was broken. With the seeds of consumption in his body, he had applied himself too unremittingly to study, and had allowed himself too little fresh air and recreation. Doubtless the inhalation of fine glass-dust incident to his handicraft also affected his health unfavorably. About four o'clock on Saturday, February 20, 1677, he came down stairs, smoked a pipe of tobacco, and conversed with Van der Spyck on various subjects, including the sermon preached that afternoon by the Lutheran pastor. He then retired to his rooms and went early to bed. Sunday morning before church time he came down again, and conversed with his hosts. Meanwhile the physician whom he had called (either Lodewijk Meyer or Schuller[1])

[1] Until recently the common assumption has been that the physician in question was Meyer; but Freudenthal,

arrived, and ordered for him a bowl of chicken broth. Of this Spinoza partook with relish at noon. In the afternoon Van der Spyck and his wife again went to church, leaving Spinoza at home with his physician. Upon their return, they were surprised to learn that Spinoza had passed away. His funeral, which took place four days later, was attended, we are told, by many eminent persons who wished to show their respect and affection for the departed lover of truth. He who had never accepted Christianity, or, as we shall see, even recognized the validity of any religion, was buried, as it happened, in a Christian church—in the new church on the Spuy. The earthly possessions he left behind were little more than sufficient to pay his trifling debts and to defray the expenses of the modest funeral.

In November of the same year, his friends published the "Opera Posthuma," consisting of the "Ethica" and the three fragments: "De Intellectus Emendatione," "Compendium Grammatices Linguae Hebraeae," and "Tractatus Politicus," together with selected letters.

### 8. *His Personality.*

During the last years of his life and for a long time after his death, Spinoza was frequently referred to as an atheist, and occasionally by hostile religionists as possessing what was popularly supposed to go with atheism, a diabolical spirit. But even his antagonists did not charge him with any

following the Dutch writer, W. Meijer, concludes on various grounds that he was Schuller. Op. cit., p. 303; cf. note.

specific lapses from moral rectitude or with any specific flaws of character. Nevertheless the derogation of the man (as distinguished from the disparagement of his views), little and obscure as it has been, has provoked in reply a glorification amounting sometimes almost to apotheosis. In order to vindicate his moral character against the insinuations supposed to be implied in the charge of atheism, his admirers have emphasized his virtues, even the most common virtues, so strongly as to create the impression on the uninformed that he was not only a saint, but a sort of religious genius. Characteristic utterances of this kind we shall shortly have occasion to quote.

At the risk of appearing ungenerous, we will attempt to portray in a few words the real Spinoza; and, for the sake of precision, we shall do so both in negative and positive terms. What we are about to say will appear fully justified only after studying his writings. In characterizing him negatively, we must say that he was no saint. (Not all abused heretics are saints). We may not say even that he was in any sense religious. (Not all Jews are religious). He frequently went to church; he sometimes even praised the preaching to which he listened; he used to tell his hostess her religion was good enough, and exhorted her to give ear to the instructions of her pastor; but all this, as we shall see, was only the consistent observance of a fundamental prudential maxim of his, enforced perhaps by a natural considerateness for the feelings of others. Himself and all emancipated minds he regarded as above religion. Describing him in positive terms, we must say that he was a sincere, harm-

less, amiable man; but these qualities do not place him upon a pinnacle of unique moral excellence; for as much may be said of too many others. It is certain that his most serious defect of character was lack of moral courage. But this, as we have already observed, is explained and extenuated by the fact that he was nurtured in a community which was compelled to practice discretion rather than valor. If he had no personal interest in religion, he had a supreme, one might say, exclusive interest in knowledge. The pursuit of knowledge was a passion with him, and it was the only passion that possessed him. Probably there is not another example in history of a man whose thinking was so little influenced by emotional and volitional elements. To a unique extent he was disposed to look at all things in the dry light of reason. It is this that makes him so fascinating to men whose dominant interests are scientific and philosophical. And it was because of his exclusive interest in knowledge, not because of any "other-worldliness," that he attached no value to money. His wants were few, and beyond the satisfaction of these, money could not procure him anything he prized.

## CHAPTER II.

## DIVERSITY OF OPINION IN REGARD TO SPINOZA'S RELATION TO RELIGION.

### 1. *Various Expressions on the Subject.*

From Spinoza's own time, but especially since the latter part of the Eighteenth Century, there has prevailed the most extraordinary diversity of opinion in regard to the significance of Spinoza and his philosophy for religion.

Pierre Bayle, one of the first to give a biographical notice of Spinoza, says, in his famous "Dictionnaire Historique et Critique," that he was "an atheist of an entirely new method,"[1] and elsewhere that he was "the greatest atheist that ever lived." Leibnitz claimed that Spinoza denies intelligence to God and puts a blind necessity in his place.[2] Jakobi, an appreciative student of the system, to whom was due especially the renewal of interest in Spinoza in the Eighteenth Century, regarded the system as atheistic,[3] although he expressed admiration for the man. Kant confessed that he had not carefully studied Spinoza's philosophy, but he did not hesitate to relegate it to the class of fatalistic systems which

[1] Article on Spinoza: "Il a été un athée de système et d'une méthode toute nouvelle." Cf. Pensées diverses sur les Comètes. Both are found in Freudenthal's "Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's."

[2] Works, by Gerhardt, I, 149: "Dicit Deum proprie non intelligere ne velle." Théodicée, Sec. 173: "Il parait avoir enseigné expressément une necessité aveugle."

[3] Ueber die Lehre des Spinoza. Breslau, 1785.

deprive the World-ground of all understanding. Fichte characterized Spinoza's "God" as one that never becomes self-conscious, and Schelling calls the principle of Spinoza's pantheism "blind" substance. Hegel, as is quite intelligible, places a very high estimate on the system as such, regarding it in fact as the very type of speculative thinking, and would call it "Acosmism" rather than "Atheism;" yet he finds that it lacks the principle of personality; for Spinoza's Absolute is only "rigid substance, not yet Spirit."[1] In his famous "Addresses on Religion," Schleiermacher has referred to Spinoza in language which implies that his philosophy is in the highest degree religious and that Spinoza himself was a sort of Christian saint. "Reverently offer with me," he exclaims, "a lock to the shades of the holy cast-out Spinoza! The exalted World-spirit penetrated him; the Infinite was his beginning and end, the Universe his only and eternal love! In holy innocence and deep humility he gazed into the eternal world and saw how He was its most lovable mirror. Full of religion was he, and full of the Holy Spirit!"[2] Of the post-

[1] Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie, III, 373-7: "Wenn man anfängt zu philosophieren, so muss man zuerst Spinozist sein." "Der Spinozismus ist also Akosmismus."

[2] Reden über die Religion. Pünjer's edition, p. 52: "Opfert mit mir ehrerbietig eine Locke den Manen des heiligen verstossenen Spinoza! Ihm durchdrang der hohe Weltgeist, das Unendliche war sein Anfang und Ende, das Universum seine einzige und ewige Liebe, in heiliger Unschuld und tiefer Demut spiegelte er sich in der ewigen Welt, und sah zu wie Er ihr liebenswürdigster Spiegel war; voller Religion war er und voll heiligen Geistes; und darum steht er auch da, allein und unerreicht, Meister in seiner Kunst, aber erhaben über die profane Zunft, ohne Jünger und ohne Bürgerrecht."

Hegelian philosophers in Germany, S. G. W. Sigwart,* A. Trendelenburgh,[1] and J. H. Loewe[2] have attempted to show that Spinoza's God must be regarded as self-conscious. Schopenhauer, who was a careful and appreciative student of Spinoza, observes that he deprived the Absolute of personality, and that "God" is only the euphuistic name which he gave to matter in order to make it respectable. Johann Ed. Erdmann[3] concedes a peculiar kind of self-consciousness to Spinoza's Absolute, and Christoph Sigwart[4] also seems to think that the "Ethics" at least contains sufficient grounds for this assumption. On the other hand, Kuno Fischer,[5] Th. Camerer,[6] and James Martineau[7] take the opposite view; although Kuno Fischer misleadingly asserts also that Spinoza was in agreement with essential Christianity.[8] Frederick Pollock, in his recent work, affirms that in Spinoza's system "God" is impersonal, but not unconscious;[9] and, assuming an attitude characteristic of many other writers, adds: "We decline to enter on the question on which chapters if not volumes might be spent, whether Spinoza's way of

* Der Spinozismus historisch und philosophisch erläutert. Tübingen, 1839.

[1] Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie, p. 55.

[2] Die Philosophie Fichtes. Mit einem Anhange. Ueber den Gottesbegriff Spinoza's und dessen Schicksale. Stuttgart, 1862.

[3] Grundriss d. Geschichte d. Philosophie, Sec. 272, 7.

[4] Spinoza's neuentdeckter Traktat, pp. 94-95.

[5] Geschichte der neueren Philosophie, Fourth ed., p. 359.

[6] Die Lehre Spinoza's, p. 1.

[7] Study of Spinoza, Third ed., pp. 330-350.

[8] Descartes u. seine Schule, II, p. 152.

[9] Spinoza: His Life and Philos., p. 328.

looking at the world and man is to be called a religion or not.''* Pfleiderer fails to determine with sufficient precision Spinoza's conception of ''God,'' but assumes that it is a religious conception, and that Spinoza was a man of strong religious interest. ''With all his daring in the fight against traditional opinions,'' he says, ''Spinoza is as far from being an enemy of true religious faith as was Luther in his bold attacks on Romish dogmas.''[1] But Van Vloten, the enthusiastic Dutch student of Spinoza, who has given us the latest and best edition of his works, expresses himself as follows: ''By retaining the name of God, while he did away with his person and character, he has done himself a great injustice. . . . . It is in his having done away with final causes, and with God along with them, that Spinoza's true merit consists.''[2] While Freudenthal, speaking in a vein typical of many, says: ''The heart of his teaching is pious self-surrender to an infinite Divine Being. There is no justification, therefore, for his having been long calumniated as an impious corrupter of morals and as an atheist. He who seeks his happiness and freedom in the love of God cannot be called irreligious. He who regards virtue as its own reward cannot be a corrupter of morals. And no atheist is he who, like Spinoza, finds in the idea of God the foundation and completion of all knowledge.''[3]

* Ibid., p. 333.

[1] Geschichte d. Religionsphilosophie, 45.

[2] Quoted by Matthew Arnold in his essay, "Spinoza and the Bible," from Van Vloten's "Supplementum."

[3] Spinoza. Sein Leben und seine Lehre. Stuttgart, 1904—I, 310.

Many who have not been critical students of philosophy have not hesitated to express quite positive judgments in regard to Spinoza's relation to religion. Most of these have assumed as a matter of course not only that Spinoza himself was a man of the strongest religious interest, but that his Absolute is an omnipotent, omnipresent consciousness,—the God of religion *par excellence*. Herder, for example, one of the earliest admirers of Spinoza in Germany, seemed to see in his infinite substance the fullness of all spiritual perfections; and ranked Spinoza himself with the Apostles, saying: "The flame of all thought and of all feeling is love. It is the highest reason as well as the purest divine exercise of the will. If we will not believe this on the authority of Saint John, we may do so on that of the doubtless still more divine Spinoza!"[1] In the same vein writes Von Dalberg in a letter to Herder: "Spinoza and Christ, in these two alone is found pure knowledge of God; in Christ the secret, higher way to divinity; in Spinoza the highest peak that reasoning can reach."[2] Friedrich von Hardenberg (Novalis), in his emphatic ascription of a religious character to Spinoza, called him the "God-intoxicated philosopher"—a phrase that has since become famous. Hegel's characterization of the system as acosmism, though understood by students of philosophy, has often been mistaken by others for an authoritative expression of the view that for Spi-

[1] Gott. Einige Gespräche von J. G. Herder, p. 41.

[2] In Herder's Reise nach Italien, p. xxx. Quoted in Van der Linde's "Spinoza: seine Lehre und deren erste Nachwirkungen in Holland."

noza the world was nothing and God was everything,—God, that is, in the religious, not the merely metaphysical sense of the term. Alfred Tennyson once remarked that Spinoza, though often misunderstood, was in fact "so full of God that he sees Him everywhere,—so much so that he leaves no room for man;"[1] and applied to him the oft-quoted phrase *gottbetrunken*—"God-intoxicated."[2] Ernest Renan, in his commemorative oration, exclaims: "Listen, listen, Gentlemen, to the recipe of the 'prince of atheists' for finding happiness. It is the love of God. To love God is to live in God. Life in God is the best, the most perfect; for it is the most reasonable, the happiest, the fullest."[3] Coleridge, who was anxious to vindicate Spinoza from the charge of atheism, seems in one passage to admit that he denies all intelligence to the Absolute.[4] Referring to the view of Van Vloten cited above, Matthew Arnold asserts that "compared with the soldier of irreligion M. Van Vloten would have him to be, Spinoza is religious;"[5] and he quotes at face value

[1] Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by his Son, Vol. II, 424.

[2] Daniel G. Brinton, in his recent "Religions of Primitive Peoples," incidentally confesses to the same view of Spinoza: "It makes no difference whether we analyze the superstitions of the rudest savages, or the lofty utterances of John the Evangelist, or of Spinoza the 'God-intoxicated philosopher;' we shall find one and the same postulate to the faith of all." p. 47.

[3] Spinoza. Discours prononcé à la Haye le 21 février 1877, à l'occasion du 200e anniversaire de sa mort,—p. 20. La Haye, Martinus Nijhoff. 1877.

[4] Compare citations given by Martineau ("Study of Spinoza," pp. 329 and 333) from marginal notes by Coleridge in a copy of Paulus' Spinoza now in the Library of Manchester New College, London.

[5] Essays in Criticism, p. 252.

Spinoza's own language, "The love of God is man's highest happiness and blessedness."[1] The German poet Heinrich Heine has expressed himself in regard to Spinoza's life in language which can mean only that personally Spinoza was an intensely religious character, and by implication that Spinoza's system is a religious conception of the world. "His life," says he, "was a copy of the life of his divine kinsman, Jesus Christ." Goethe, in a letter to Jakobi, once said of Spinoza: "He does not prove the existence of God; for him existence is God. And if on this account others abusively call him an atheist, I want to call him, to his praise, superlatively theistic, superlatively Christian."[2]

### 2. *Causes and Significance of the Diversity of Opinion.*

The foregoing quotations present a formidable array of doctors who disagree, and are calculated at first to create the presumption that the point in question is hopelessly obscure. It will be observed, however, that not all of them are entitled to serious consideration. They may be divided into three classes: (1) rhetorical expressions, (2) opinions of those who are not competent to form an intelligent judgment in the matter, and (3) the judgments of philosophical critics. In regard to the first class, it must be said that, in highly wrought language that has a rhetorical motive behind it, we should not look

[1] Ibid., p. 249.

[2] Grünwald, "Spinoza in Deutschland," p. 119: "Er beweist nicht das Daseyn Gottes, das Daseyn ist Gott. Und wenn ihn andere deshalb Atheum schelten, so möchte ich ihn Theissimum und Christianissimum nennen und preisen."

for accurate statements of truth, but for the striking expression of half-truths or of plausible untruths. Such language has but little logical value even in the mouth of a philosopher; and we should attach no importance to it in the present controversy. For this reason we may not take very seriously the glowing words of Schleiermacher. Although recognizing that, on account of the peculiarities of his own thinking, Schleiermacher must naturally have been attracted by Spinoza's doctrine of an infinite immanent cause, and must also have acknowledged, in common with all unprejudiced persons, the blamelessness of Spinoza's life, we are compelled nevertheless to make considerable allowance for rhetoric. That sort of reference to Spinoza at the time when the educated public was doing tardy justice to his philosophy and personality, was well calculated to win from that class a hearing for the claims of religion, and this was the aim of Schleiermacher's "Addresses."

The opinions of the second class,—of those, namely, who are not competent judges in the matter—do not deserve of course serious consideration; although they are the most confidently asserted and the most frequently met. As a matter of fact, there are very few who have a right to express any views on the subject. No value may be attached to the opinions of any one who is not a student of philosophy in general and has not given long and patient thought to Spinoza in particular. The utterances, therefore, of such men as Herder, Tennyson, Heine, and even Goethe have no importance. In general they are only impressions gained from an uncritical or partial reading of Spinoza's writings.

Some of them have no better foundation than mere hearsay.

As to the philosophical critics, whose opinions require respectful consideration, it will be recognized that they have not always clearly distinguished between three different questions; namely, (1) What was Spinoza's personal character? (2) Is Spinoza's God to be regarded as intelligent or not? and (3) Does his system furnish an adequate theoretical basis for religion? Each of these questions should be answered by itself,—even the third; for, notwithstanding that it would really be answered in answering the second, the identity of the two is not always clearly recognized. Indeed, a cross-examination of witnesses would certainly bring out the fact that many expressions which imply opposite views of Spinoza's attitude toward religion represent at bottom different opinions, not in regard to Spinoza's teaching, but in regard to what constitutes religion on the one hand and atheism on the other. For this reason the same author will often seem to imply different views of Spinoza in different passages. Freudenthal, for example, whom we have quoted above, is able to deny that Spinoza is an atheist, and at the same time to say: "To pray to the Deity, to whom he attributes neither understanding nor will, appears to him to betray a mental weakness, at which he smiles."[1]

The failure to make the distinction referred to has not in every case been an unwilling one. On this question, in fact, as on every other that relates in any way to religion, there has been a regrettable want of frankness. Those who have regarded Spi-

[1] "Spinoza: Sein Leben u. seine Lehre." I, p. 197.

noza's philosophy as irreligious, or anti-religious, have often seemed to shrink from saying as much in unequivocal language. Apparently there has prevailed a fear that such an expression might be interpreted as a detraction[1] of Spinoza's character; or that it might precipitate upon the head of the critic the reproach of being in secret sympathy with hostile theologians; or, in case appreciation of Spinoza were sufficiently warm to disarm this suspicion, that it might expose the critic to the charge of being at heart an atheist himself. Accordingly we find that most of those who have unambiguously expressed the opinion that Spinoza's system is irreligious and that Spinoza himself possessed no religious interest are clear-headed theologians on the one hand and avowed atheists, such as Schopenhauer and Van Vloten, on the other,—a very significant agreement.

Another circumstance that sometimes makes it difficult to determine precisely the thought of those who have expressed, or implied, judgments in regard to the point in question, is the indefinite meaning of the terms employed. In philosophical discussion, even the word "God" is employed in two senses, namely; either for the Absolute in the metaphysical sense—which may not possess a single character in common with the God of religion, save absoluteness—or for the theistic, i. e. religious, con-

[1] This apprehension has not been groundless. Matthew Arnold, for example, (Essays in Criticism) characterizes Pierre Bayle's language in regard to Spinoza as a "detraction," although Bayle says merely that Spinoza's system is atheistic. Matthew Arnold thus does what he can to perpetuate the now obsolescent habit of making mere theoretical opinions grounds for imputations against a man's character.

ception of the Absolute only. When, therefore, someone insists that Spinoza believed in "God," we are no wiser than before, until we know which God is meant. And as for "atheism," it is a word that has acquired from its associations such an offensive odor and such vagueness of meaning that, as a recent writer has remarked, "polite and intelligent persons" have lately shrunk from using it. When it is employed without definition, we do not know whether to take it as an abusive epithet or simply as the name for an anti-religious—but not necessarily immoral—world-view. If some one, therefore, resents the suggestion that Spinoza was an atheist, we cannot be sure this means more than that Spinoza, in his opinion, was a harmless man. It would conduce to greater clearness of thought in the field of religious-philosophical discussion, if we agreed to retain the word in its etymological signification as designating simply an anti-religious conception of the Absolute, without implying any reflection on the character of the person who holds it. The spirit of charity and tolerance is now so far advanced that it is generally recognized that all varieties of purely theoretical views are compatible with elevation of character; and it ought to be possible at last to call systems of philosophy by unambiguous names.

In so far as there has been any *real* difference of opinion among students of philosophy in regard to Spinoza's attitude to religion, it has been due to varying estimates of the value of his religious terminology. Those who have either left the question undecided or taken Spinoza's philosophy for a religious system, seem to assume that the expressions he borrows from religious language retain more or

less of their original meaning. Beginning with the prejudice that *Deus* must mean "God," they meet this and kindred expressions so constantly in reading Spinoza that they never quite succeed in getting rid of the prejudice, in spite of the fact that Spinoza gives his own definitions of nearly all the terms he employs. The ideas commonly expressed by a word become so inseparably linked with it through association that a constant effort is required to think it in a new or modified sense; and it is not surprising that we find the subtle influence of Spinoza's terminology manifest in the judgments of otherwise clear thinkers. If no other change were made in his system than the substitution throughout of the word "nature" for "God"—a substitution which he himself expressly permits—it is probable that no religious character would ever have been ascribed to his philosophy, and it is certain that the title "God-intoxicated philosopher" would never have occurred to anyone.

In view of the state of philosophical nomenclature in his time, it ought to be recognized that, even if he had desired to employ unambiguous terms, he would have found them with difficulty. It is not quite obvious, in fact, with what word he could have replaced *Deus*. "Nature" has been proposed, but this word suggests the changing world of immediate sense-perception rather than a changeless ultimate condition, or cause, of the sense-world,—the object which Spinoza defines as *Deus*. We have, however, good grounds for supposing that he did not always intend to employ unequivocal language. We know it was his conviction that a high degree of accommodation, both in language

and in practice, to unemancipated minds could help on the cause of science and philosophy. The first among his *regulae vivendi* for the devotees of knowledge runs as follows: "To accommodate our speech to the mind of the multitude and to practice all those things [in vogue] which do not hinder us from attaining our end. For we are able to obtain no little advantage from the multitude, provided we accommodate ourselves as far as possible to the mind of the same. Moreover, as a result of this policy, they will lend friendly ears to the truth."[1] He seems, therefore, to have thought it the part of wisdom and of zeal for the progress of sound knowledge, to render the bitter pills of new truth more palatable by sugar-coating them with traditional phraseology, and, as far as possible, to conform in conduct to current conventionalities.

Not only did he define this attitude as sound in theory, but there exists the best of evidence that he reduced theory to practice. As this fact is persistently ignored by influential writers, and as a recognition of it is a necessary condition of understanding Spinoza's doctrine of religion, we are compelled to emphasize it to a degree that might otherwise seem ungenerous.

[1] De Intellectus Emendatione, p. 6. The text reads as follows: "Ad captum vulgi loqui, et illa omnia operari, quae nihil impedimenti adferunt, quo minus nostrum scopum attingamus. Nam non parum emolumenti ab eo possumus acquirere, modo ipsius captui, quantum fieri potest, concedamus; adde, quod tali modo amicas praebebunt aures ad veritatem audiendam." Some one will no doubt try to understand *ad captum vulgi loqui* as meaning, "to accommodate our language to the capacity of the multitude," in the sense of avoiding learned and technical language, but this would not be consistent with the fact that Spinoza always wrote in Latin, nor in harmony with the context.

Of his outward conformity to popular customs with which he could have had no inward sympathy, we have an example in his frequent attendance on public worship, where he reverently endured tedious expositions of orthodox theology. That he sometimes employed accommodation in language, and even in ideas, he expressly declares. After he had dictated to a pupil a course of lectures in Descartes' philosophy, which he had supplemented with a discussion of his own in regard to certain points in metaphysics, he printed his notes for the benefit of intimate friends. The resultant work he refers to in a letter to Oldenburg as a treatise "which I had dictated to a certain youth to whom I was unwilling to teach my opinions openly;"[1] and adds that the appended "Metaphysical Thoughts," purporting to contain his own views, were so far from doing so that on certain points they expressed "precisely the opposite." Before printing the manuscript, he had in fact required a preface to be written warning readers that not all the views expressed in the work were his own. Hence it cannot, of course, be charged that in this case the accommodation was to the mind of the public; but the fact remains that on his own testimony he had accommodated his instruction to the views of his pupil. His friend Lodewijk Meyer, who wrote the preface, specifies, among the things which Spinoza did not accept, the doctrine of free will, and adds: "It must also not be overlooked here, that into the same category, i. e. of things to be affirmed only from the standpoint of Descartes, must be put the expression found in

[1] Epis. 13 (olim 9).

many passages, namely, 'this or that is beyond the reach of the human mind;' for this is not to be accepted as if our author, in saying such things, spoke according to his own way of thinking." What Meyer says about this expression ought to be carefully noted, for it occurs in other of Spinoza's works. In regard to its use here, we may properly remark only that as the doctrine of the will is referred to by Meyer as but one case *ex multis* of anti-Spinozism contained in the work, we may assume that Spinoza had not discussed frankly with his pupil any subject in regard to which he dissented from traditional theology.

That the preface must have been submitted to Spinoza and have received his express approval, appears from his letter to Oldenburg, where he says the only condition on which he had permitted the work to be printed was that, *me praesente*, some one should revise the style and write a preface. It is quite certain therefore that, in matters touching religion, Spinoza was disposed indirectly to introduce his own ideas into the mind of his pupil while formally teaching opposite views. In the preface, Lodewijk Meyer says indeed that Spinoza thought himself bound in conscience to give his pupil nothing which would contradict Descartes, since he had promised to instruct him in Descartes' philosophy. But this is not what Spinoza himself writes to Oldenburg. Without considering himself obliged to justify what he has done by asserting the claims of duty, Spinoza frankly declares that he was simply "unwilling" to teach the youth his real opinions "openly." His unwillingness to do so "openly" implies his willingness to do so indirectly.

His disappointment in his pupil is no doubt to be explained in part by the latter's inaptitude to indoctrination of this kind.

The warning to his confidants at Amsterdam by no means to reveal his real opinions to the young man,[1] shows that his caution in this case was due chiefly to motives of personal prudence. The fear of disagreeable consequences is, in fact, something which was much of the time present to Spinoza's consciousness when writing. This too constant state of mind formulated itself in the general maxim which, in one form or another, the reader of his works often meets, that "it is a common vice of men to confide their counsels to others."[2] It is a significant fact, well illustrating how great a rôle prudence played in his life, that even his seal-ring bore the inscription, "Cautious!"[3]

This excessive prudence caused him to defer from time to time the publication of different works, and even to hesitate about publishing at all. "I shall rather be silent," he writes to Oldenburg, who constantly and earnestly urges him to publish his thoughts, "I shall rather be silent than obtrude my opinions upon men against the will of my country, and thus render them hostile to me."[4] That words like these should ever have been represented as only expressions of a noble

[1] Epis. 9 (olim 27). Cf. Martineau, p. 43, note.

[2] Tractatus Theol.-Polit, (V. Vl. & L.) I, p. 603. Quoted by Martineau.

[3] Freudenthal, "Spinoza," vol. I, p. 177. A cut of the seal is given on the title page of V. Vl. & L.'s edition of his works.

[4] Epis. 13 (olim 9) p. 235.—Silebo potius, quam meas opiniones hominibus invita patria obtrudam, eosque mihi infensos reddam."

self-effacement, shows how little candor and impartiality admirers of Spinoza have sometimes exhibited. His habitual attitude of timid caution appears also in his counsel to the friends to whom he entrusted the manuscript of his "Short Treatise." "Since the character of the time in which we live," says he, " is not unknown to you, I will earnestly entreat you to take great care in regard to the making known of these things to others."[1]

When, after the publication of his exposition of Descartes' philosophy, he became involved in correspondence with Blyenbergh, whom he had too hastily judged to be in sympathy with thoroughgoing speculation, he told his unprofitable correspondent plainly that he regretted having revealed to him his whole mind. "But I see," says he, "that I should have done much better to answer you in my first letter with the words of Descartes;" and explains that he had not done so, because "I thought, if I did not reply to you in harmony with my real opinions, I should be sinning against the obligations of the friendship which I so heartily offered you."[2]

It is certain therefore that Spinoza's timidity, or, if you will, his peaceable disposition, as well as his theoretical maxims, determined him, when dealing privately with individuals of religious interest, sometimes to conceal and sometimes to veil his real opinions, and occasionally even to express views diametrically opposed to his own. To question or ignore this patent fact would be as foolish as it would be disingenuous.

[1] Korte Verhandeling, II, Cap. XXVI, Opera III, p. 97.
[2] Epis. 21 (olim 34) p. 278.

But more important than an acquaintance with his practice in private relations, would be a knowledge of how far his caution and his belief in the expediency of accommodation affected his modes of expression in the writings composed for the public. That those factors should have more or less influence was natural and inevitable. And in fact, although Spinoza's *thinking* was to a unique degree independent both of external influences and of subjective interests, his *modes of expression* were influenced in the highest degree by deference to his environment and by considerations of personal prudence. This was the natural consequence of the union in one person of an unparalleled cognitive interest and excessive timidity. The general result of the above-named influences upon the writings intended for publication may be stated as follows: (1) The retention throughout of religious terms for ideas which Spinoza had consciously emptied of all religious content; (2) The elaborate and artificial deduction of more or less irrelevant conceptions bearing a formal resemblance to religious notions; and (3) In matters of little importance to his system as such, but of religious significance, his expressly saying, in a few instances, what he did not mean in any sense. Proofs of these assertions will be pointed out from time to time in the course of the following pages.

By adopting this policy, Spinoza hoped not only to disseminate his doctrines more widely, but especially to possess great advantage when called upon, as he certainly would be, to defend himself against the assaults of religionists. If they said he was an atheist, he could point to the fact that

"God" was the Alpha and Omega of his system. If they said his doctrines were incompatible with practical religion, he could reply that the charge was so far from being true that he had in fact elaborately proved the "love of God" to be the *summum bonum*. And in reality this is just the defense he always made. How well his purpose was served is shown by the whole subsequent history of Spinozism, but more especially by its history since the last quarter of the Eighteenth Century. For the question whether Spinoza and his system are in conflict with religion has been met by most interpreters in the same way in which Spinoza met it, generally by quoting his own words. In their intemperate zeal to vindicate an abused member of the philosophical guild, they have thus used language which has practically served the cause of untruth. Instead of frankly meeting the issue and saying he was or was not a religionist, they have indulged in irrelevant declamation to the effect that Spinoza was no glutton, no drunkard, no libertine, no reckless assailant of the foundations of society, but a man of serious purpose and of good morals; and have cited his words in favor, not only of "brotherly love," but of "the service of God." The result is that there still prevail not only among laymen, but among students of philosophy, the vaguest possible notions in regard to Spinoza's relation to religion.

While aiming in the way described to temper the opposition of some and to parry the blows of others, Spinoza trusted that philosophical minds would look beneath mere words, and discern his real meaning. He never suspected, I imagine, that he would be

misunderstood by any whose judgment he valued; but alas! he went so far that, in regard to his religious views, he has sometimes deceived, it seems, the very elect.[1]

From Spinoza's point of view his accommodation does not appear wholly unjustifiable. He honestly believed that the vast majority of men are incurably blind and ignorant, and that they will remain so to the end of time. The modern idea of a gradual development of society by which all classes of men are eventually to be redeemed, in some measure at least, from ignorance and folly, was foreign to his thought, and in general to the thought of his times. It must be remembered also that the rights of free speech were not yet established. In Holland, where Spinoza wrote, there was to be sure a partial exception, but only a partial exception, to the general prevalence of intolerance. The question for Spinoza, therefore, was not how to make the masses intelligent, but how the elect sons of reason were to adjust themselves to the masses as hopelessly irrational and dangerous. And among the masses (*vulgus*) he probably classed, not merely the uneducated—these were unable to read his writings, as they were composed in Latin—but all theologians who took their theology in earnest, and other learned men whose views were determined more by authority, or by considerations of practical utility, than by rational insight. From his standpoint he could consistently seek nothing more than a *modus vivendi* with these classes.

[1] This remark applies more especially to some who seem to have read the "Tractatus Theologico-Politicus" without having studied carefully the "Ethics" and the "Short Treatise."

The extent of Spinoza's accommodation was not, of course, a constant quantity; it must have varied with his consciousness of hostile surroundings and with his moods. In writings whose preparation extended over years we are not surprised therefore to find many verbal contradictions in regard to matters of religious significance.

In view of the circumstances, the interpretation of Spinoza should evidently proceed according to the following principle: *Whenever two passages contradict each other, one of them expressed in religious terminology and the other not, we are bound to regard the latter as conveying Spinoza's real meaning; and, in general, whenever religious phraseology implies views clearly in contradiction with the first principles of his philosophy, we must accept as his real opinions, not those implied in the religious phraseology, but those in harmony with the first principles of his philosophy.* It will hardly be questioned that, in the present case, this procedure is in accord with the axiomatic principles of sane criticism.

## CHAPTER III.

## SPINOZA'S DOCTRINE OF KNOWLEDGE.

### 1. *Certain Peculiarities of Spinoza's Psychology.*

In the unity of the one substance (God, Nature) co-exist, according to Spinoza, an infinite number of incommensurable and mutually independent attributes, with only two of which, extension and thought, we are acquainted. All objects of our knowledge are modifications, or modes, of one of these two attributes. The relation between them is such that for every mode of one attribute there exists an exactly corresponding mode of the other. Accordingly everything in the Universe is composed of a mode of extension and a mode of thought. All things, therefore, have souls—"*omnia, quamvis diversis gradibus, animata.*"[1] There exists, however, no causal relation between the modes of one attribute and those of another, between body and spirit. No event in one produces any effect whatever in the other.[2] The correspondence is simply that of parallels. Now it is in harmony with this general doctrine, that the human mind, or soul, is defined as the idea whose object (corresponding mode of extension) is the human body. What is meant by this expression, will be more exactly understood after a brief exposition of Spinoza's somewhat obscure doctrine of bodies.

[1] Eth. II, 13, scholium.
[2] Eth. III, 2.

The most simple bodies (atoms?), the elements out of which all other bodies are built up, differ from one another only by reason of the fact that some are in motion and others are at rest, or that some are in more rapid motion than others. In apparent contradiction with this statement, however, it is affirmed that when one simple body[1] produces an effect on another, this is the resultant of the "natures" of both, as though after all a simple body may have some peculiar character other than that given by its rate of motion. Wherein this qualitative difference consists is not explained; but, as bodies are not distinguished *ratione substantiae*,[2] we may suppose it to be only a peculiarity in kind of motion.

When a number of elementary bodies come into very close relation to one another, they form a composite body, or *individuum* of the first order. Bodies constituted by other composite ones of different natures are *individua* of the second order, and those which in turn are constituted by several bodies of the second order are *individua* of the third order, etc.[3] As elementary bodies differ in that some move and others are at rest, or in that some move more rapidly than others, composite bodies differ by reason of the peculiar "ratio" of rest and motion which each contains. The more complex the body, the greater is the power of knowing possessed by the mind associated with it.[4] Now, as the human body is composed of many *individua* of different

[1] Eth. II, axioms 1 and 2.
[2] Eth. II, Lemma 1, dem.
[3] Eth. II, Lemma 7, scholium.
[4] Eth. II, prop. 13, sch.

natures, which are themselves in a high degree composite,[1] and is therefore capable of being affected in a great variety of ways by other bodies, the human mind has uncommon capacity for knowledge.

We may now inquire, just what does Spinoza mean when he says that the human mind is the "idea" of the body? What are we to understand by idea? Unfortunately Spinoza himself does not seem to have clearly understood what he meant by the word, and hence has employed it in quite different senses.

In the first place "idea" denotes what we now call a presentation in an individual mind, such as a perception, a memory, or a thought image constructed by the imagination. The use of the word in another sense is occasioned by the circumstance that every mental experience, no matter of what kind, has its physiological correlate. This, Spinoza calls an "object." The ideas of things outside of us, therefore, must have two objects, the event in our body on the one hand, and the thing on the other. The one is unknown, the other known. Nowadays we know that even in sense-perception we do not perceive what takes place in our ears, for example, when we hear a strain of music, nor what takes place in our eyes when we view a landscape. This is always something quite different from the music and the landscape, which are the only objects of conscious thought. And indeed Spinoza did not suppose the affections of the body in perception to be literal images of the things perceived. He expressly warns us that we must not take his use of traditional terminology to imply this view; for the so-called

[1] Eth. II, Postulate 1, p. 87.

"images" do not in fact convey "figures" (pictures) of the objects.[1] When, therefore, he calls a given sense-perception the "idea" of a corresponding event in the body, it is not clear, even in this case, that he means a presentation which has for its content that physiological fact, although his phraseology always implies as much. But whatever his thought in the case of sense-perception, it becomes certain, when we take account of his "clear" ideas, that he did not regard all mental experiences as literal transcripts of their physical correlates. Clear ideas can contain nothing else than what we see in them. Now among them are the conceptions of substance, of modes, of love, of hate, etc. Indeed, according to Spinoza, there is no human passion of which we cannot form some clear conception.[2] But, as none of these clear ideas are defined in terms of physical elements and motion, we may not suppose that Spinoza means that they are literally ideas of bodily affections. For, to hold that they are really cognitions of the contemporaneous physiological events, would be tantamount to saying that when we conceive any one of them we have before our minds a number of physical elements in motion. This view certainly no one will ascribe to Spinoza.

In the two senses above-mentioned an "idea" is assumed to be an event in consciousness. But by Spinoza's postulate that everything without ex-

[1] Eth. II, 17, schol.—Porro, ut verba usitata retineamus, corporis humani affectiones . . . . rerum imagines vocabimus, tametsi rerum figuras non referunt.

[2] V, 4, cor.—Hinc sequitur, nullum esse affectum, cujus non possumus aliquem clarum et distinctum formare conceptum.

ception on the side of extension is accompanied by its double on the side of thought, the word seems at times to denote an unconscious entity. The "idea" which in this sense belongs to a tree, is not the idea that Peter has when he perceives the tree, nor the one that Paul or James has; it is something independent of human consciousness. But is it itself an individual consciousness? Spinoza does not directly answer the question. We have no reason to suppose, however, that he regarded the spiritual counterpart of every object (of a stone, a clod, or a pool of water, for example) as endowed with consciousness. If he had been asked to explain this matter more fully, he must have said substantially: In the case of the higher organisms (the more complex *individua*), the corresponding *ideae* are conscious; in the case of the lower organisms, they are only the undeveloped rudiments of consciousness; and in inorganic objects, they are of a still lower order, inert souls as it were.

This view would be quite in harmony with his way of thinking; for, as we have seen, he expressly declares that in proportion to their complexity bodies are "*diversis gradibus animata.*" In reading Spinoza, therefore, we have to reckon with a possible extension of the meaning of "idea" (and also of "cognitio," as we shall find) to unconscious spirit. These are unsuitable terms, to be sure; but, on account of the poverty of language, they perhaps serve as well for the expression of his peculiar thought as any he could find. His preference for them was due, as we shall see later, to his intellectualistic psychology.

In these three senses, then, Spinoza employs the term "idea." This circumstance increases the difficulty of understanding his doctrine of knowledge all the more, as the common name "idea" often conceals from his mind the differences of meaning, and leads him into logical fallacies. In particular, it is to be noted that, as his psychological intellectualism inclines him always to see in an "idea" knowledge of some kind, this sense is often tacitly assumed where, if taken literally, it would be quite incomprehensible.

We will now recur to Spinoza's conception of the essential nature of the human mind. The first utterance on this point we find in the "Ethics," Part II, prop. 11: "The first thing that constitutes the actual being (*actuale esse*) of the human mind is nothing else than the idea of some particular thing actually existing." The expression "first thing" implies, as appears from the demonstration following the proposition, that the human mind in its fundamental nature is a presentation and not a feeling nor a volition; and that these latter are only derivative and secondary phenomena. In other words, it announces his psychological intellectualism, of which we spoke. The rest of the proposition signifies merely that the object of this presentation belongs to the class of "particular things," by which term he designates all objects of the temporal, changing, perishable world. Proposition 13 of the same Part declares further that this particular thing "is the body." Now, as a presentation of the body, the human mind may be regarded in two different aspects: first, as a "complete" or "adequate" idea exactly representing the

body in all its relations, immediate and remote, to the rest of the material universe; and secondly, as an "incomplete" or "inadequate" idea, i. e., as an idea that embraces the complete idea only so far as the individual consciousness extends. Now when we take into account Spinoza's doctrine of bodies, the idea which constitutes the conscious mind becomes the "incomplete" idea of a certain proportion of rest and motion. But idea in what sense? Clearly it is at least the spiritual counterpart. From the explanation above it follows also that it is rather of the nature of a presentation than of a volition or of a feeling. But may we go a step further and say that of the proportion of rest and motion which constitutes the essence of the body the mind is a presentation in the sense that it is a perception (or conception) which has this for its content? The above-mentioned ambiguity of the term "object" vitiates his thinking at this point, and leads him to obscure and confused statements. As we proceed, however, we hope to make clear that he does not consciously and explicitly teach this absurdity, although, when the exigencies of his argumentation require it, he often tacitly assumes it.

The question now arises, what is this idea so far as it extends beyond human consciousness? As we shall see when we come to consider Spinoza's doctrine of clear ideas and of causality, it ought to be the rest of the body's spiritual double, i. e., that on the side of spirit which, when added to the human consciousness, completely represents the body inclusive of all its causal relations to the rest of the material universe. But is it of the nature of conscious thought? In other words, does the body's

idea, so far as it is not contained in the human consciousness, fall in a universal consciousness? We shall find grounds for concluding that it does not. Spinoza conceives the spiritual as, in its deepest nature hypostatized logic, and as such it is always at least the content of possible thinking, when not conscious thought; and, if in speaking of such an idea as we have described he ever employs the language of consciousness, calling it "clear," "adequate," etc., it is because he applies the same terminology to the thinkable as to actual thought.

The further question naturally presents itself: How are the manifold elements of consciousness related to the fundamental idea which constitutes the *primum* of the mind? This point Spinoza has left in obscurity. He affirms, indeed, that the idea is "not simple, but composite,"[1] and thus accounts for the multiplicity exhibited in consciousness; but he does not explain how the unity of the same is to be conceived. However, if the basal fact of the mind is the spiritual double, in some sense, of the formula that expresses in general terms that proportion of rest and motion which characterizes the human body as such, particular mental states may be conceived, in accordance with Spinoza's doctrine of composite bodies, as doubles of those particular variations of the general formula which may take place without altering its total value. As a matter of fact Spinoza sometimes treats the mind as an aggregate of ideas that have no organic connection, and at other times as a very real unity, conceiving the different ideas as activities and states of a psychical entity, or, as we should say, of a substantial soul. The latter way

[1] Eth. II, 15.

of treating it is seen in Eth. V, 31: "The third kind of knowledge depends on the mind as a real cause, in so far as the mind itself is eternal."[1]

The mystery of self-consciousness is explained as follows: The idea of the body, the mind, is no less a piece of reality than is the body. Viewed in this aspect, it is an object and must itself have a corresponding idea. For the same reason, to be sure, the idea of an idea must in turn have its idea, and so on *ad infinitum*; and Spinoza, in fact, admits this consequence and cites to confirm his theory the empirical fact that whoever knows anything knows in that very fact (*eo ipso*) that he knows it, and at the same time knows that he knows that he knows it, etc., etc.[2] In this way he seems to wish to explain (1) the self-consciousness of the mind in every act of knowledge, and (2) the continuity of self-consciousness. The difficulties involved in his thought we may at present ignore. He adds that the idea of the mind (i. e. *idea ideae*) is in fact nothing else than the *forma* (distinctive quality) of the idea so far as this is considered as a mode of thought apart from its relation to an object. This would seem to imply that self-consciousness is the inherent character of mind, and to contradict the above-noticed apparent assumption on his part that an idea is not always fully developed self-consciousness. Accordingly his language here has been interpreted as having far-reaching significance and as

[1] Cf, Korte Verh. I, Cap. 2, Zamenspreeking, p. 18, where, in an illustration, both points of view appear confusedly together.

[2] Eth. II, 21, dem. and schol.

necessarily implying self-consciousness in the Absolute.[1]

Its bearing upon his conception of God will be more accurately estimated after we have penetrated further into the details of his system.

### 2. *The Imagination, "Imaginatio."*

By this word Spinoza means in the first place what we call sense-perception. It must always be borne in mind, however, that, according to Spinoza, our ideas of sense objects are not caused by these objects. Events in the spiritual world are entirely independent of events in the spatial world, although the two series correspond. It is only through the principle of parallelism that sense-perception takes place. The physiological and psychological processes involved, he describes as follows: When the body (a sense organ) is affected by an external body, the character of the physical affection is determined not only by the nature of the human body, but also by the nature of the external body; and, as every effect involves its cause, this affection "involves" the nature of the external body, and contains, as it were, its image. Now by virtue of the principle of parallelism the human mind "contemplates" this affection, i. e. has an idea that involves the nature of the external body and that affirms (*ponit*) its actual existence;[2] and so the mind "contemplates" the external body as present, or as actually existing." It would seem therefore that the form which the "idea" of a bodily affection takes is the percep-

[1] Recently by Joachim, "A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza," p. 72.

[2] Eth. II, 17, dem. Cf. Eth. II, 26, Cor., dem.

tion of the external body. But, if we are to take in earnest Spinoza's declaration that the images in our bodies (sense organs) are after all not pictures or copies, but only the effects, of the external body so far as these indicate its nature, the process becomes less simple. The idea of the bodily affection is then only the ground for the construction of the mental image of the thing and for objectifying the same. Between the "contemplation" of the bodily affection therefore and the "contemplation" of the external body, we should have to supply in the process a link that would be of the nature of an immediate (and unconscious) inference.[1] But, as Spinoza has not expressly so explained the matter, we cannot be sure that this was clearly his thought. As the problems of a later time in regard to subject and object did not exist for him, it is not improbable that the hiatus in the process described by him escaped his notice; and that, for his thinking, "to have an idea which involves the nature of the external body" sufficiently explained "our contemplating it as actually existing."

The value of the knowledge obtained through sense-perception Spinoza estimates very low. It has several defects. In the first place, as the character of every affection of the body is determined by the nature of the human body as well as by that of the external body, and, as what is contributed by the one is inseparable from what is contributed by the other; the corresponding idea is so mixed

[1] The idea of the bodily affection is indefinitely conceived as the *means* through which the external body is perceived.—Eth. II, 26, cor., dem. Cum mens humana *per* ideas affectionum sui corporis corpora externa contemplatur, etc.

that what refers to the external body is not clearly distinguishable from the rest.* Every perception therefore, conveys only a confused and unclear knowledge. In the second place, as an external body affects the human body only through a part of its characters, it leaves there incomplete traces of its nature. Consequently, that complete idea of a perceived body which, according to the principle of parallelism, must exist somewhere, lies partly within and partly without the human mind. For the human mind, therefore, the idea is incomplete, mutilated (*mutilata*).[1]

The term imagination, as employed by Spinoza, includes also the memory. According to his definition, this consists only in an association of sense-perceptions in that accidental (non-logical) order in which they occur in experience.[2] It has to do, therefore, with unclear and mutilated ideas alone. From a passage in "The Improvement of the Understanding,"[3] it appears that one motive for relegating the memory to the domain of the imagination was the effort to vindicate to all those ideas which belong to the rest of the mind a non-temporal character. Another, no doubt, was the fact that the memory is a source of error. But how he accounts for the remembrance of other than sense objects,

* Eth. II, 16, et cor. 2.

[1] Eth. II, 25; II, 40, sch. 2; II, 49, sch.; De Intellectus Emendatione p. 23.

[2] Eth. II, 18, sch. But compare De Int. Em. pp. 25-26. Sterns' German translation of "corruptionem" in this passage by "Fälschung" is a mistake. Cf. Eth. II, 31, cor., where "corruptibilis" in a similar connection must mean "perishable."

[3] De Intel. Emend., p. 26.

or whether this problem distinctly presented itself to his mind at all, cannot be determined.[1]

Without attempting any further analysis of the imagination, it will suffice to know that Spinoza himself never sought to determine its limits through adequate psychological investigations, but accepted the traditional Aristotelian distinction between the passive and the active parts of the mind, and identified the "imagination" with the passive. "For my part," he says, "you may understand by imagination what you please, provided only it be something else than the intellect and be that on account of which the mind possesses a relation of passivity."[2] The proper criterion, however, by which a given idea is known to belong to the imagination is not any demonstrable connection of the idea with a passive psychological process, but its peculiar character, i. e. its unclearness, vagueness, inadequateness, etc. "For it is a matter of indifference what you understand [by the imagination] after we know that it is something vague."[3] "In so far as the mind has inadequate ideas it is necessarily passive."[4] If we can discern the inadequate ideas, therefore, we need no psychological observation in order to define the realm of the imagination; it is exactly conterminate with the sum of inadequate ideas.

[1] It is perfectly clear, however, that memory "quid diversum esse ab intellectu, et circa intellectum in se spectum nullam dari memoriam, neque oblivionem." De Intell. Em. 26.—"Nam a solis corporibus afficitur imaginatio."—Ibid.

[2] De Int. Emend. p. 26.—"Unde anima habeat rationem patientis."

[3] De Int. Emend. 26-27.

[4] Eth. III, 1, III, 3, dem.

What then is that peculiarity which constitutes for our minds the distinguishing mark of these ideas? They are variously described as incomplete, unclear, (*non clarae*), vague (*vagae*), mutilated (*mutilatae*), truncated (*truncatae*), confused (*confusae*), and indistinct (*non distinctae*). Any of these characteristics ought to be sufficient to enable us to recognize them, but unclearness and indistinctness seem to be looked upon as most properly the distinguishing characteristics. As according to Spinoza clear knowledge of objects includes a knowledge of their causes, inadequate ideas are sometimes regarded as of the nature of *consequentiae absque præmissis*.[1]

We must now note just how the imagination is related to error. All ideas, to employ Spinoza's own phraseology, are true "in so far as they are related to God;" for all ideas, when considered as belonging to God (total reality) correspond perfectly with their objects (*ideata*).[2] Error, then, consists in nothing positive,[3] but is due to the partial character of the knowledge contained in the inadequate ideas, which exist in individual finite minds only.[4] How this assertion is to be understood, appears from the declaration that sense-perceptions, ideas constructed by the imagination properly so-called, and the associations of ideas in the memory, do not, in themselves considered, contain error; for the mind does not err because it possesses such ideas, but only because sometimes it

[1] Eth. II, 28, dem.
[2] Eth. II, 32.
[3] Eth. II, 33.
[4] Eth. II, 36, dem. Cf. II, 35.

has no occasion to doubt their reliableness and therefore allows them to pass for more than mere ideas of the imagination (*imaginationes*). Accordingly the deficiency involved in inadequate ideas becomes the cause of error only in the absence of a true idea through which their real character is manifest.[1] It is this deficiency that must account also for errors of judgment and of inference. In the case of a false judgment, the error consists in our affirming of a thing something that is not contained in its concept or definition.[2] Here we have, either of the subject or of the predicate, an inadequate knowledge which the mind does not recognize as such.

But the nature of error will become clearer after an explanation of Spinoza's doctrine of the reason.

### 3. *The Reason, "ratio."*

Reason is the antithesis of the imagination, constituting the "active" part of the mind. Its essential characteristic is expressed in the fact that through it alone all adequate ideas have their origin. The term is sometimes employed by Spinoza in a more extended sense than at others. In the more restricted sense it designates the mental activity (or faculty) by virtue of which we acquire the so-called *notiones communes* and deduce from these other adequate ideas.[3] It is in this sense that we will consider it first.

In discussing the inadequate ideas, he showed that we cannot gain an adequate knowledge of any individual thing in the actual world, and apparently

[1] Eth. II, 17, sch.; 35, sch.; 49, sch., p. 113.
[2] De Int. Emend. p. 22.
[3] Eth. II, 40, schol. 1 and 2. Cf. II, 29, schol.

excluded the possibility of adequate knowledge altogether. We are now reminded, however, that there are other objects of knowledge, namely, the *properties* of things, and, in particular, those properties which are common to all bodies and are the same in every part as in the whole,[1] but do not constitute the "essence" of any particular thing.[2] Extension is an example. Of such objects we can evidently acquire adequate ideas, despite the conditions which were found to render impossible an adequate knowledge of individual bodies: for that which is common to all bodies must leave in an affection of the human body not partial, but complete, traces of its nature. The idea of any external body, therefore, though not conveying an adequate knowledge of that body as such, contains all the data for an adequate idea of the common qualities of all bodies. For the same reason we can, of course, have adequate ideas also of all those properties which the human body has in common with only a few other bodies.[3] It is to be observed, however, that the mind never gains adequate ideas immediately through sense-perception (the abstract ideas that originate in this way are in the highest degree confused),[4] but only through a sort of comparison, in that the mind is inwardly determined to "contem-

[1] Eth. II, 37.

[2] Eth. II, def. 2.

[3] Eth. II, 39.—The question arises, What sort of knowledge should that be which is gained when one part of our body affects another, through the sense of touch, for example? It ought to follow that we get in this way an adequate knowledge of that which is the same in each part as in the whole, i. e., of that general proportion of rest and motion which constitutes the essence of the body.

[4] Eth. II, 40, schol. 1.—"summo gradu confusas."

plate several things at the same time and to take cognizance of their agreements, differences, and incompatibilities.''[1] This account of the matter was necessary in order consistently to exclude all passivity from the reason.

In the mind's relation to the body, therefore, all rational activity, as being self-determined mind, must correspond only with physiological changes that have their source not from without, but from within the body itself, that originate in its independent nature. But as we proceed, it will appear that neither the independence of the one order of change nor of the other can be maintained without contradicting fundamental assumptions of Spinoza's system, and that the possibility of adequate ideas is, after all, only apparent.

The above-mentioned *notiones communes* are the most general of the adequate ideas, and constitute the ''foundations'' of reason, i. e. the points of departure for deductive procedure. Spinoza has nowhere enumerated them. It has been supposed, however, that by inference they can be shown to be the following: (1) conception of substance; (2) conception of attribute; (3) conception of mode; (4) thought; (5) extension; (6) idea; (7) motion and rest.[2] As Spinoza has given no list, and as there is no evidence that he himself had determined their exact number, we can not be sure that this table is either exhaustive or correct. It may be doubted whether Spinoza thought of the conceptions

[1] Eth. II, 29, schol.

[2] Of the *universalia realia*, which we regard as but another name for the *notiones communes*, Leibnitz made a list that differs somewhat from this. See M. Fouscher de Careil, ''Leibnitz, Descartes, et Spinoza,'' pp. 122-7.

of substance, attribute, and mode as falling in this category. As defined by him they must, of course, be regarded as adequate ideas; but as when speaking of *notiones communes* he seems to have in mind only such ideas as have for their content "properties" of "real" things, it would appear that only the last four may be confidently classified as *notiones communes*.[1] It is possible, however, that Spinoza regarded the others also as involved in our perception of real things, and therefore as in a certain sense "properties."

In its more extended sense the term *ratio* includes the so-called *scientia intuitiva*, or "third kind" of cognition. The specific difference which distinguishes this from reason in general, is that it proceeds from the adequate ideas of certain attributes of God (Nature) immediately to the adequate knowledge of the essences of things.[2] Although the relation of intuition to reason in general is not in all respects clear, it seems certain, (1) that it attains its results in a peculiar way, i. e. not through syllogistic processes, but through immediate insight; and (2) that it has a peculiar function, namely, that of discovering the "essences" of particular things. We may suppose therefore, what seems to be everywhere assumed, that ordinary reason is not equal to this task. It is to be observed, however, that the results of the different kinds of rational activity, so far as they extend, are of equal validity.[3]

[1] Eth. II, 38, cor.; De Intel. Emend. p. 30.
[2] Eth. II, 40, schol. 2. Cf. Eth. V, 36, schol.
[3] Eth. II, 41 and 42.

To rational knowledge in general belong certain peculiar characteristics: (1) "It is not of the nature of reason to view things as contingent, but as necessary."[1] (2) "It is of the nature of reason to perceive things under a certain aspect of eternity,"[2] i. e. in purely logical relations, and so "in no temporal relation."[3] (3) "All adequate ideas," the products of reason, "are clear, and distinct, and true." "Adequate" and "true" are in fact used interchangeably by Spinoza. "Adequate" has reference to the completeness of the idea considered in itself; "true" takes account of the relation of the idea to its object, signifying its agreement with the same.[4]

The question now arises, what is for Spinoza the ultimate criterion of truth? His answer to this question is explicit and repeated. It consists in a peculiar character that belongs to the ideas as such: "It is certain that true thinking is distinguished from false, not only by what is extrinsic (the object), but especially by what is intrinsic;" "that there is in the ideas some real quality by which the true are distinguished from the false."[5] Now this credential badge of all true ideas is, of course, nothing else than that characteristic which we have already had repeated occasion to mention, namely, "clearness and distinctness." "All ideas that are clear

[1] Eth. II, 44.

[2] Eth. II, 44, cor. 2.

[3] Eth. II, 44, cor. 2, dem.—"absque ulla temporis relatione."

[4] Epis. 60, p. 386 (olim 64).—Cf. Eth. II, def. 4.

[5] De Intel. Emend. p. 21. Cf. ibid. p. 22.—Forma verae cogitationis in eadem ipsa cogitatione sine relatione ad alias debet esse sita. And Eth. II, def. 4.

and distinct can never be false."[1] Of these terms Spinoza has given us no formal definitions. We may safely assume, however, that for him they mean nothing else than they meant for Descartes, from whom he seems to have taken them. Descartes gives the following definitions, which do not establish a very definite distinction between the two terms: "I call clear that [idea] which to the attentive mind is present and open: but distinct that [idea] which, when it becomes clear, is so severed from all others and so precise that it plainly contains nothing else than what is clear."[2]

Clearness and distinctness must always and inevitably produce certainty in the knowing subject. "Whoever truly knows a thing must at the same time be certain."[3] "He who has a true idea, knows at the same time that he has a true idea, nor can he doubt the truth of the thing."[4] It is a matter of indifference, therefore, whether we regard clearness and distinctness of the ideas, or certainty on the part of the subject, as really the ultimate criterion of truth. It should be carefully noted, however, that for Spinoza certainty is more than the mere absence of doubt, it is something positive,[5] i. e., I suppose, a degree of conviction that arises only after attentive and critical examination of an idea. Accordingly it is possible to have no doubt as to the validity of a false idea, and thus to fall into error; but it is never possible to be certain of that valid-

[1] Ibid. p. 21. Cf. Descartes, Principia, I, 43.
[2] Prin. P. I, § 45.
[3] Eth. II, 43, dem.
[4] Eth. II, 43.
[5] Eth. II, 49, schol.—nam per certitudinem quid positivum intelligimus, non vero dubitationis privationem.

ity. One can err only by allowing the absence of doubt to pass for positive certainty.

### 4. *Logical Presuppositions.*

"Adequate ideas," as we saw, are reached, when the mind "is determined from within, by its contemplation of several things at once, to understand their agreements, differences, and contrasts."[1] This language, which seems to have particular reference to the formation of adequate ideas of the common properties of sense-objects, is supplemented by a remark of more general application: "as often as in this way or *in any other way* [the human mind] is disposed (*disponitur*) from within, it views things clearly and distinctly."[2] In order to discover truth, therefore, the mind needs only to act on its own motion, undisturbed by inroads of the emotions and of the senses. Spinoza assumes, in fact, that human reason is able, by its independent activity, apart from the data of experience, to frame clear conceptions, which necessarily have corresponding objects in the world of reality. His ontological proofs of the existence of the Absolute, for example, which we shall soon have occasion to consider, presuppose this assumption. In respect of his general philosophical standpoint, therefore, he is to be characterized as a thorough rationalist.

In this position he was confirmed by the uncritical assumption, common to the leading thinkers of his time, that mathematics is the pattern of all science. The unerring validity of mathematics in its own province of numerical and spatial relations,

[1] Eth. II, prop. 29, schol.

[2] Ibid. The italics are ours.

caused them to suppose that the same methods of reasoning applied to other sciences would yield equally infallible results. But they overlooked the essential difference between mathematics and all other sciences. In geometry, for example, which Spinoza took for his special model, we possess in the data of a given problem and in the nature of the space idea common to all minds, everything implicitly that becomes explicit in the result. In no other sciences have we anything of the kind. Any conceptions from which we may choose to proceed by deduction can embody only certain properties with which we have become acquainted by experience, and the mind has no *a priori* principles, like those involved in the space idea, that enable us to go beyond the given properties to other new ones. But if in common with the thinkers of his time Spinoza overlooked this circumstance, it is one of his merits that, by his thorough-going application of the geometrical method to philosophy, he made manifest its inadequacy in this field. He does not shrink from entitling his chief work, "*Ethica ordine geometrico demonstrata*," and from announcing further that it is his intention to treat "God," "mind," and "human actions" "*ac si quæstio de lineis, planis, aut de corporibus esset.*"[1]

In accordance with his predilection for the methods of mathematics, he takes as his starting point axioms and definitions. His assumption of axioms is in harmony with his methodological presupposition that in dealing with quite simple ideas

[1] Eth. III, end of the introductory paragraph. Cf. Eth. I, Appendix p. 68.—"Nisi mathesis . . . . aliam veritatis normam hominibus ostendisset, etc."

error is impossible.* Definitions must express, if perfect, the innermost nature of the objects defined, so that out of the definitions will logically follow all the more particular properties of the objects. It is in assumed harmony with this proposition that he requires the definition of a finite thing to include its proximate cause. A circle, therefore, must be defined as follows: "It is a figure that is described by any line, one end of which is fixed, the other movable." This definition obviously includes the proximate producing cause, if it does not, as Spinoza mistakingly supposed, permit all properties of the circle to be deduced from it.[1] When it is not a question of a geometrical figure, but of a real thing, the proximate cause would often be only that which is represented by a more general term.[2] For in this connection it is to be carefully noted that by the word "*res*" Spinoza designates not merely things in the ordinary sense of the term, but also the properties of things, especially their common properties. These he characterizes as "eternal," since they are, so to speak, "omnipresent" and therefore in his view independent of the existence of the particular individuals presented by the world of change. They are individual things (*singularia*), to be sure, but they are universal individuals (*uni-*

* De Int. Emend. pp. 19-20.—"inde sequitur primo, quod si idea alicujus rei simplicissimae, ea non nisi clara et distincta poterit esse."

[1] In geometry we discover the properties of the circle by studying the figure, and not by analysis of the definition.

[2] De Int. Emend. p. 31.—Unde haec fixa et aeternae . . . erunt nobis tanquam universalia, sive genera definitionum rerum singularium mutabilium, et causae proximae omnium rerum.

*versalia*). Examples are presumably (he himself has given none) extension, motion, etc. They correspond, therefore, to the *notiones communes* already mentioned.[1] Of this kind of "things" it is not difficult, as we saw, to obtain clear and distinct ideas; and they are to be employed as general terms, or (according to his way of thinking) as "proximate causes," in framing definitions of particular things properly so-called.[2]

From this starting-point of self-evident truths expressed in axiomatic propositions and in definitions, Spinoza proposed to advance by deduction to other important truths and finally even to an adequate knowledge of individual things.[3] These were to be deduced, let it be observed, from those "universals" and never constructed from the manifold data given in the sense-perception of any particular object. Spinoza hoped to get behind the data of the senses. His method assumes that every idea is of such a nature that from it logical consequences may be drawn and that every thing (even every eternal thing, despite its peculiar character) must produce effects.[4] True conceptions of the individual things of the sense world would be inferences from the "universals," and the individual things them-

[1] Page 80. See Eth. II, 40, schol. 1 and 2. Cf. Eth. II, 29, scholium.

[2] It would be erroneous, however, to suppose that Spinoza ever pretended to have arrived at an adequate knowledge of any particular thing in the outer world. He has nowhere attempted to define one.

[3] That is, to a knowledge of their *nature* but not to a knowledge of the conditions which determine their time, place and number.

[4] Eth. I, 36.—Nihil existit, ex cujus natura aliquis effectus non sequitur. Cf. Eth. I, 16, dem.

selves (i. e. their objective essences) are products of the hypostatized universals.[1]

To deduce the "essences" of particular things from universals, or "eternal things" is the peculiar function of the *scientia intuitiva* or "third order" of cognition. Spinoza first hypostatized the general properties of the material world and then regarded them as both the logical ground and the real cause of the special qualities of individual things, attributing to the human mind the power of intuitively discerning this relationship.

From what has been said it appears that Spinoza conceived of causal connection as a logical connection of an analytical kind. This fundamental presupposition is expressed in one of his first and most frequently repeated axioms: "The knowledge of an effect depends on a knowledge of the cause, and involves the same."[2] He assumes, therefore, what

[1] De Int. Emend., p. 31.—Haec [intima essentia rerum] vero tantum est petenda a fixis atque aeternis rebus, et simul a legibus in iis rebus, tanquam in suis veris codicibus inscriptis, secundum quas omnia singularia et fiunt et ordinantur; imo haec mutabilia singularia adeo intime atque essentialiter (ut sic dicam) ab iis fixis pendent, ut sine iis nec esse nec concipi possint.

It is commonly assumed that Spinoza is a thoroughgoing nominalist. This view of him has become traditional, and is accepted without examination even by careful writers. Sir Frederick Pollock, for example, in his interesting and widely-read book on Spinoza has been quite misled, it seems to me, by the tradition. He says (p. 142): "Spinoza's nominalism which we have always to bear in mind, is a sufficient warning against assuming that the 'eternal things' have anything to do with kinds, qualities, or classification." As a matter of fact, Spinoza is as thorough a realist *in his own way* as was Plato. Cf. Martineau's "Study of Spinoza," pp. 111 and 150, note, and Fullerton's "The Philosophy of Spinoza," passim.

[2] Eth. I, Ax. 4.—Effectus cognitio a cognitione causae dependet, et eandem involvit.

the subsequent development of philosophy has shown to be erroneous, that it is possible so fully to grasp the nature of things that by an analysis of our conceptions of them, we can discover what their effects must be.[1] It is a consequence of his axiom that we may not assume any causal relation to exist between objects the conceptions of which contain nothing in common. Hence extension and thought, body and soul, can produce no effect on each other. The same presupposition, which resulted in an inconsequence in Descartes' philosophy, gave rise to Occasionalism in the minds of Geulincx and Malebranche, and led in the case of Spinoza to the doctrine of Parallelism.

In accordance with these methodological presuppositions, Spinoza was convinced:

1. That it is possible to apprehend and to define the Being "which is the cause of all things;"

2. That from this Being the "essences" of all things in nature are to be deduced;

3. That the intelligible arrangement of conceptions would correspond to objective nature; that accordingly the mind would become a mirror of nature, for it would "have subjectively the essence, arrangement, and connection of the same."[2] But it is to be observed that when Spinoza speaks here of an "intelligible arrangement" of things, he has in mind only that of the "eternal" things, i. e. a sort

[1] It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that he assumed an adequate knowledge of any individual things given in the external world, though he hoped to know these adequately sometime by means of intuition.

[2] De Int. Emend. p. 30.—nam et ipsius essentiam, et ordinem et unionem habebit objective. "Objective" must be translated nowadays by "subjectively" or "ideally."

of classification of general conceptions.* From the beginning Spinoza renounced all hope of being able to make intelligible the temporal succession of *perishable* things.[1]

We have described the salient features of Spinoza's logical theory. It was for him only an ideal, which hovered before his mind and constantly influenced his thinking, but never reached full realization and application. In regard to the "third order of cognition," which plays so important a rôle in his theory, he confesses in "The Improvement of the Understanding" that those things which he had been able up to that time to learn by means of it were "very few."[2] If he had been asked for a concrete example, the very few things would certainly have turned out to be none. At no later time could he have given a more satisfactory answer; for he was counting on a power of the mind that does not exist.

That characteristic of Spinoza's method which is of the most practical importance is his identification of real (ontological) cause with logical ground or logical presupposition of any kind,—especially a more general conception. In the world of change "cause" may mean for him either ontological cause or logical presupposition; in the world

* De Int. Emend. p. 30.—Sed notandum, me hic per seriem causarum, et realium entium, non intelligere seriem rerum singularium mutabilium; sed tantummodo seriem rerum fixarum aeternarumque.

[1] De Int. Emend. p. 30.—Seriem enim rerum singularium mutabilium impossible foret humanae imbecillitati assequi . . . .

[2] Ibid. 8.—Ea tamen, quae hucusque tali cognitione potui intelligere, perpauca fuerunt.

of changeless realities, "cause" means only logical presupposition.[1]

[1] This will appear in a subsequent chapter on "Substance and Modes."

# PART I.

# SPINOZA'S CONCEPTION OF GOD

## CHAPTER I.

## HIS DEFINITION OF SUBSTANCE AND HIS PROBLEM.

The objects of our knowledge we spontaneously analyze into the properties of things and the things themselves which possess the properties. We assume that behind the various sense-properties of an object there exists a real, substantial unity in which these inhere. This we call substance. The question whether this spontaneous assumption is rationally justified and how, after a critical examination of our knowledge, we are to conceive of things, has always constituted the chief problem of metaphysics.

Aristotle's conception of substance was dominant with all leading thinkers until a considerable time after the opening of the modern period of philosophy. According to the best known of his definitions, it is that which "is neither predicated of any subject nor is in any subject; as, for example, a certain man or a certain horse."[1] Ignoring the confusion of ontological with logical subject which appears in Aristotle's language, we may paraphrase his definition in harmony with his general doctrine as follows: Substance is always the particular thing (in distinction from the universal), and indeed the particular *thing-in-itself*, so to speak, the possessor

[1] ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΙΑΙ, 5.—*οὐσία δέ ἐστιν ἡ κυριώτατά τε καὶ πρώτως καὶ μάλιστα λεγομένη, ἣ μήτε καθ' ὑποκειμένου τινὸς λέγεται μήτ' ἐν ὑποκειμένῳ τινί ἐστιν, οἷον ὁ τὶς ἄνθρωπος, ἢ ὁ τὶς ἵππος.*

of properties, which is itself no property of anything else.

Under the influence of the Aristotelian tradition, Thomas Aquinas defines substance as "being subsisting *per se;*"* which is explained by the further statement: "for we say that those things subsist which do not exist in others, but in themselves."[1] Accordingly substance is that which exists not only in itself, but through itself. John of Damascus gives a similar definition: "Substance is a self-existent thing that does not need anything else as a support."[2] J. Martini expresses himself in almost identical language.[3] Suarez says that "substance stands under the accidents in such a way that it itself does not require a similar support."[4] With Descartes we find two definitions, one of which runs as follows: "Everything in which inheres immediately anything which we perceive, i. e. any property, or quality, or attribute, the real idea of which is in us, is called substance."[5] The other resembles in expression that just quoted from John of Damascus: "By substance we can understand nothing else than a thing that so exists that it needs no other thing in order to exist."[6] Let it be observed that ac-

* Sum. Th. I, qu. 3, art. 5.—"ens per se subsistens."

[1] Sum. Th. I, qu. 29, art. 2.

[2] "ἡ οὐσία ἐστὶ πρᾶγμα αὐθύπαρκτον μὴ δεόμενον ἑτέρου πρὸς σύστασιν."

[3] Metaphys. p. 487.—"rem per se subsistentem nec indigentem alterius ope ut sit."

[4] Disp. XXX, p. 299.—Substantia ita substat accidentibus ut non idigeat ipsa simili sustentaculo.

[5] Def. 5.—Rationes more geometrico dispositae.

[6] Prin. I, 51.—Per substantiam nihil aliud intelligere possumus quam rem quae ita existit, ut nulla alia re indigeat ad existendum.

cording to this definition, strictly construed, substance is no longer merely that which does not need, like qualities, to be regarded as inhering in a subject (this was Aristotle's idea); but it is that which is absolutely independent and unconditioned. The obvious consequences of this thought seem not entirely to have escaped Descartes, for he concedes that God alone can be substance in the most proper sense of the term.[1]

We come finally to Spinoza's definition: "By substance I understand that which is in itself and is conceived through itself; i. e. that whose conception does not need the conception of any other thing by the aid of which it must be formed."[2] Spinoza regards substance, therefore, as the independently existent, and this not merely in the sense of not inhering in a subject, i. e. of not being a property of something, but in the sense of the absolutely independent, the unconditioned.

Down to the time of Spinoza it was customary to assume along with the infinite substance, or God, a multitude of finite substances. But as the finite substances depended in some way on God, their proper substance character could not, according to the definition of substance as the independently existent (if taken literally), be consistently maintained. Before Spinoza, no one had definitely and decisively drawn this obvious conclusion, although Descartes had reduced the multitude of substances to two (or to two kinds), and had logically done these away by admitting that the only substance

[1] Ibid.

[2] Eth. I, def. 3.—Per substantiam intelligo id, quod in se est et per se concipitur; hoc est id, cujus conceptus non indiget conceptu alterius rei a quo formari debeat.

which clearly needs no other thing is God.[1] Granted that particular things after all are not substances, the thought lay very near that they must then be "accidents," "affections," "modes," "modifications," of the one substance, the Absolute; for, according to tradition, all reality was divided into substances and accidents or modes. Whatever was not a substance, therefore, was necessarily a mode. It was in this way that for Spinoza the problem arose: How to comprehend all things as in their real nature only particularizations, so to speak, of the Absolute. Owing to his predilection for the method of mathematics, his solution of the problem was cast in the form of a deduction of the particular from the general; although like all philosophers who have followed the deductive method, he was compelled first to determine the nature of the general from the particular, in order then apparently to deduce the particular. His real aim was only to make intelligible in some way the self-sufficiency, or self-existence, and the unity, organic and substantive, of the world.

[1] Prin. Phil. I, 51.—"Substantia quae nulla plane re indigeat, unica tantum potest intelligi, nempe Deus."

## CHAPTER II.

## THE FORMAL ATTRIBUTES OF SUBSTANCE.

The argumentations about to be examined are a stumbling-block to the modern reader and would severely tax our respect for this truly great thinker, if we did not take account of Spinoza's place in history. They represent scholastic elements that have gone over into his philosophy, and show to what a degree the most independent thinkers of the first period of modern philosophy remained under the influence of Scholasticism, even when they developed their own thoughts in conscious antithesis thereto.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume as a matter of course that the ontological demonstrations which we are about to cite had the same motive as those of traditional Christian theology. The ontological reasoning of theology aimed to establish the existence of a transcendental God. But for Spinoza, who identifies God, Substance, and Nature,[1] the existence of "God" must be just as certain as that of the world, and requires no demonstration. All knowledge, according to Spinoza, involves the knowledge of God. Accordingly his ontological arguments were not really intended to make sure the *existence* of "God," but to establish the *self*-existence and therewith the eternity, the infinity, etc., of Nature.

[1] Eth. IV, Praefatio, p. 180.—"Deus seu Natura."

1. *The Self-Existence and Eternity of Substance.*

The self-existence of substance is proved in the following manner: According to definition, substance is "that whose conception needs the conception of no other thing." But that whose conception needs the conception of no other thing can not have any cause outside of itself, for the cause would in this case necessarily be included in the conception, since "the knowledge of an effect depends on a knowledge of the cause and includes the same." Now as substance can have no outer cause, it must be "*causa sui*," self-existent. Therefore existence pertains to the nature of substance.[1] This demonstration is, of course, a *petitio principii*; since, in order to be cogent, it must assume just that existence of substance which is to be proved. For if something has no outer cause, it follows that it has an inner one only after we have assumed that it already exists and needs a cause of this existence. Yet Spinoza is quite in earnest and supposes he has demonstrated both the existence and the self-existence of substance, though of course his interest is really in the proof for the self-existence. He tacitly admits, however, that the result of his demonstration does not after all go beyond what is immediately contained in the definition, and hence in a note he founds the self-existence of substance upon the naked definition: The idea of existence belongs to the clear and distinct conception of substance (*id, quod in se est*), consequently substance exists in objective reality; the thought that substance does not exist would be a contradiction. Or, to vary the

[1] Eth. I, prop. 7.—"Ad naturam substantiae pertinet existere."

phraseology, we can conceive the essential nature of anything except substance without thinking the existence of the same; existence, therefore, is not an element of its content; but substance, according to the definition, we cannot conceive without thinking existence as belonging to it. In harmony with his doctrine of clear and distinct ideas, then, the existence of substance is not only in the idea of substance, but in substance itself, "*extra intellectum.*"[1]

From the attribute of self-existence is derived that of eternity. Since the conception of "*causa sui*" includes no ground or cause for passing away, but unqualifiedly posits existence, the attribute of eternity is for Spinoza's way of thinking so obvious a consequence, that he says he understands by eternity nothing else than just this self-existence.[2]

### 2. *The Infinitude of Substance.*

From the self-existence of substance follows for Spinoza also its infinity. As the definition of substance represents an unqualified affirmation of existence, and includes no negation or limitation, substance must necessarily be infinite. Because the

[1] Eth. I, prop. 8, schol. 2.—Si autem homines ad naturam substantiae attenderent, minime de veritate 7. prop. dubitarent; imo haec prop. omnibus axioma esset, et inter notiones communes numeraretur. Nam per substantiam intelligerent id, quod in se est et per se concipitur. . . . Si quis ergo diceret, se claram et distinctam, hoc est veram ideam substantiae habere et nihilo minus dubitare, num talis substantia existat, idem hercle esset, ac si diceret, se veram habere ideam, et nihilominus dubitare num falsa sit.

[2] Eth. I, def. 8 (Cf. Cogitata Metaphysica, I, cap. 4; Epis. 12; Eth. I, 19, dem.)—Per aeternitatem intelligo ipsam existentiam, quatenus ex sola rei aeternae definitione necessario sequi concipitur.

word existence means existence and in no way non-existence, the existent (substance) is affirmed to be absolutely unlimited.

But this demonstration is too simple to satisfy Spinoza, and it is followed by a more complicated one. He tacitly makes the erroneous assumption that the same content cannot belong to a plurality of objects, and then draws the consequence that there cannot be a plurality of substances of the same nature.[1] From this it follows that substance is not finite; for, if it were, it would have to be limited by another substance of the same nature, since by "finite"[2] we mean nothing else than "limited by a similar." But, as there are not two substances of the same nature, substance cannot be finite.

The basis of this argument, namely, that only one substance of the same nature can exist, Spinoza thought he could prove directly from the idea of substance, as follows: A cause is required not only for the nature of a thing, but also for its existence, i. e. for the existence of the particular number of individuals possessing that nature. This cause (ground) is included either in the definition of the thing or is outside of it. In the case of most things,

[1] Eth. I, 5, dem.—Si darentur plures distinctae, deberent inter se distingui vel ex diversitate attributorum, vel ex diversitate affectionum. Si tantum ex diversitate attributorum, concedetur ergo, non dari nisi unam ejusdem attributi. At si ex diversitate affectionum, cum substantia sit prior natura suis affectionibus, depositis ergo affectionibus, et in se considerata, hoc est vere considerata, non poterit concipi ab illa distingui, hoc est, non poterunt dari plures, sed tantum una.—It will be observed that the fallacy consists in using "distinctae" in the two senses of qualitatively distinct and numerically separate.

[2] Eth. I, def. 2

it is outside. The idea of man, for example, does not imply the existence of man or of any men. But in substance we have a thing the idea of which implies necessarily existence. The "cause" of its existence (i. e. the ground for affirming its existence) is included in its definition. "But from its definition cannot follow the existence of several substances." Therefore only one substance of the same nature exists.*

Now the infinitude of substance, which is thus established, is not merely the infinitude which we may ascribe to a particular qualitative content (as, for example, to extension, which permits us to think other co-existent infinitudes of a different kind), but an absolute infinitude that embraces all possible qualitative infinitudes. Substance is infinite "existence," and as such embraces not only all known kinds of relative infinitudes, but also an infinite number of unknown kinds. It consists of an infinite number of "attributes," each of which is infinite in its kind constituting a particular qualitative content.[1]

This result is reached by Spinoza by virtue of the assumption that "the more reality or being each thing has, the more attributes it has."[2] This proposition, which he adopted from tradition, contains the same play on words that we noticed above, where Spinoza inferred the self-existence of substance from the affirmative character of the conception of "existence." Only it is here the other sense of the ambiguous expression "non-negatived existence"

* Eth. I, 8, schol. 2.
[1] Eth. I, 10, schol.
[2] Eth. I, 9.

that is employed. The unconditionally affirmative "existence" there meant the exclusion of all temporal limitations, i. e. "eternity;" here it is thought according to logical extension, and means that an infinite number of positive qualitative attributes must be ascribed to substance.*

It is not necessary to consider in further detail Spinoza's ontological arguments for the infinitude of substance. Our purpose is only to determine in essential particulars his conception of the Absolute, and to define its relation to the religious consciousness. We may add only that he supposed he could have dispensed with the demonstrations cited above and have proved the absolute infinitude of substance immediately from the idea of an absolutely infinite and perfect being, since non-existence implies a limitation and an imperfection.[1] He offers also an *a posteriori* demonstration for the existence of an infinite substance: We know *a posteriori* that finite things exist; and, if these things which we know, had the power to exist and the infinite did not have it, the finite would be mightier than the infinite; which is absurd.[2]

* "ad ejus essentiam pertinet, quicquid essentiam exprimit et negationem nullam involvit."

[1] Eth. I, prop. 11, dem. 2 and 3.—This demonstration also, like so many others employed to establish the metaphysical attributes of substance, consists in a play on words. It is affirmed that "posse non existere impotentia est, et contra posse existere potentia est." The proof of this "self-evident" proposition (it is "per se notum") is apparently only the etymological kinship of "posse" and "potentia." But "posse" is used in the problematical sense and "potentia" in the sense of "power," and not in the sense of "possibilitas," which is the substantive correlative of "posse" as here used.

[2] Eth. I, prop. 11, schol.

### 3. *The Solitariness of Substance.*

That there can not be several substances of the same attribute, we have already seen; that there can be no plurality at all of substances, has not yet been expressly affirmed and proved. This follows, however, from what is assumed to be already established. If substance is absolutely infinite and every attribute must be ascribed to it, a hypothetical second substance could have no attributes which did not already belong to the infinite substance. But in that case there would be two substances having a common attribute; which we have found to be impossible. There is therefore only one substance.[1]

The unity (solitariness) of substance, Spinoza thinks, must be regarded as unique. Strictly speaking, it is not correct to characterize it numerically. We conceive things numerically only after we have brought them into a common class. But substance cannot be so treated. Unity (*unitas*) is only a mode of thinking whereby we distinguish one thing from others which agree with it in some way. The terms "one" (*unum*) and "single" (*unicum*), therefore, can only very improperly be applied to substance.[2]

### 4. *The Immutability of Substance.*

It is entirely in accord with the peculiarities of Spinoza's thinking that he regards substance as

[1] Eth. I, 14.—This demonstration, it will be noticed, is based on the ambiguity contained in prop. 5, namely, that of the word *distinctae*, which means either "qualitatively distinct," or "numerically separate."

[2] Epis. 50; Cog. Met. I, Cap. 6. Cf. the doctrines of Plotinus.

unchangeable. The fact that he strives to reduce all reality to a transcript of logical conceptions and relations renders change something for which he can consistently find no place in his thought. Logic knows nothing of change and nothing of time. All true ideas are immutable, but all true ideas, according to Spinoza, have their exact counterparts in the realm of objective reality. Consistently, therefore, Spinoza should regard all reality as changeless. Hence it is only what we should expect when substance, the fundamental reality, whose definition moreover expresses a mere fixed relation (*in se esse*), is pronounced to be immutable, together with all its attributes.* The language employed in this connection is especially instructive. Because the definition of substance expresses nothing but "existence," its "existence" is identified with its "essence."[1] Both the "existence" and the "essence" of substance are "eternal truths." Now if there occurred any change in substance, it would have to be either in its "existence" or in its "essence," but both are "eternal truths" and any change would involve their becoming "false;" which is absurd.[2]

It would be a mistake, as we shall soon learn, to apply this immutability to moral attributes, as has always been the custom in Christian Theology; for according to Spinoza we may not ascribe any moral attributes to the Absolute.

* Eth. I, 20, cor. 2.—Deum, sive omnia Dei attributa esse immutabilia.

[1] Eth. I, 20.—Dei existentia ejusque essentia unum et idem sunt.

[2] Ibid. cor. 2.

### 5. *The Perfection of Substance.*

Another character of substance is perfection. This familiar term means for Spinoza nothing else than reality.[1] *Ens absolute perfectum*, therefore becomes identical for him with *ens realissimum*. But this traditional conception of Scholasticism acquires in the language of Spinoza a special meaning, inasmuch as he understands by it a being with an infinite number of infinite "real"[2] attributes. "If a being is infinite, its attributes must also be infinite (i. e. infinite in number and in extent); and just this is what we call a perfect being."[3] But since, according to Spinoza, the reality of an object increases in proportion to its logical extension, and since every determination of content occasions a restriction of extension (*omnis determinatio est negatio*), it must follow that *ens absolute perfectum* and *ens realissimum* are each identical with *ens absolute indeterminatum*. How he combines the two conceptions *ens realissimum* and *ens absolute indeterminatum* will appear further on. Here it is sufficient carefully to note that *perfection as a character of substance is in no respect to be distinguished from the infinitude explained above.*

[1] Eth. II, def. 6.—Per realitatem et perfectionem idem intelligo.

[2] That is, as we shall see, representing some qualitative content of actual or possible perception.

[3] Korte Verhandeling, Deel I, Cap. II, pp. 11 and 12.—" . . . . Zo het wezen oneyndelijk is, zo moeten ook zijne eigenschappen oneyndelijk zijn, en even dit is het dat wy een volmaakt wezen noemen." I translate "oneyndelijk" by "infinite in number and extent," because it would be easy to show that this must be his meaning. His use of the word in either sense and in both at the same time often accounts for a lack of precision in thought.

### 6. *Substance as Cause.*

Finally, substance is the only cause of all that exists. Accordingly it is called the "absolutely first cause"[1] of all other things, and also the "cause of itself." It is therefore a "free" cause, in the sense that it can undergo no compulsion from without, and indeed the only free cause.[2] It is likewise an "efficient" cause.[3] But in all these aspects it is an "imminent" cause.[4]

In carrying out these assumptions in regard to the causal relations of substance without surrendering any of the characters hitherto attributed to it and without violating certain presuppositions as to the nature of causality, Spinoza encounters, as we shall soon have occasion to point out, his greatest difficulties.

By reviewing the formal characters of substance which we have just considered, it will be seen that they correspond to the "metaphysical" attributes of the traditional conception of God. In so far, therefore, Spinoza is justified in calling his substance "God," and in saying: "By God I understand the absolutely infinite being, i. e. a substance consisting of an infinite number of attributes, each of which expresses an infinite essence (qualitative content)."[5] But to read into Spinoza's concep-

[1] Eth. I, 16, cor. 3.—Deum esse causam absolute primam.

[2] Eth. I, 17, cor. 2.—Solum Deum esse causam liberam.

[3] Eth. I, 16, cor. 1.

[4] Eth. I, 18.

[5] Eth. I, def. 6.—Per Deum intelligo ens absolute infinitum, hoc est, substantiam constantem infinitis attributis, quorum unumquodque aeternam et infinitam essentiam exprimit.

tion of God the content of the Christian conception, would certainly be a great mistake. It is to be carefully noted and constantly borne in mind that the characters we have thus far enumerated are merely formal and therefore shed no light on the real (qualitative) nature of the Absolute. They, considered alone, have so little significance for the religious consciousness that the most anti-religious thinkers may accept them. It is from the qualitative predicates of Spinoza's substance that its religious value is to be determined. But these are expressed in the infinite "real" attributes, among which are "extension" and "thought." We turn next, therefore, to the consideration of his doctrine of real attributes.

## CHAPTER III.

## SPINOZA'S DOCTRINE OF REAL ATTRIBUTES.

### 1. *Relation of Attributes to Substance.*

"By attribute," he says, "I understand that which intellect perceives concerning substance as constituting its essence."* The meaning of this sentence becomes plain when we recall the teachings of Descartes from whom Spinoza borrowed his doctrine of attributes.

Descartes divides the qualities of things into attributes and modes, an attribute being a primary quality, one that presupposes no other. This is assumed to represent or to "express" the nature of a given thing: "There is one special property of each substance that constitutes its nature and essence."[1] The only known attributes of finite substances are extension and thought, the first expressing the nature or "essence" of material substance,[2] the second that of thought substance. An attribute, therefore, comprehends the entire essence of the substance to which it belongs, so that there can be but one attribute for each substance. Spinoza agrees with Descartes, as far as his own problem will permit, and accordingly by "*essentia*" as applied to substance he means the nature of substance that is

* Eth. I, def. 4.

[1] Prin. Phil. I, 53.

[2] Prin. Phil. I, 53.—"quod corpori tribui potest, extensionem praesupponit, estque tantum *modus* quidam rei extensae."

faithfully expressed in a primary quality, or, what amounts to the same thing, the primary quality itself.

The expression, "what intellect perceives concerning substance (*quod intellectus de substantia percipit*)" also becomes intelligible from the traditional doctrine of substance and attribute. From time immemorial substance had been regarded as an independent something behind the properties of a thing whose essential nature is truthfully revealed in them. Descartes gives expression to this thought in one of the definitions quoted above. That the perceived properties (especially the "attributes") truthfully represent the nature of the substance itself, was accepted by him as a matter of course; "for it is evident to reason that an attribute must be the attribute of something real."[1] The expression "*quod intellectus de substantia percipit*" is for Spinoza only another form of expression for the same way of thinking, and means nothing else than, "what we in cognition refer to an underlying substance that is otherwise concealed from us." Only for Spinoza, in harmony with his general doctrine of knowledge, it is "*intellectus,*" in express distinction from sense-perception, that is named as the faculty whose function it is to determine which of the properties are to be considered as attributes. The definition, therefore, may be paraphrased as follows: By attribute I understand a primary property, which, in consequence of the agreement of our ideas with reality,

[1] Respons. more geom. dispositae. Def. 5.—quia naturali lumine notum est nullum esse posse nihili reale attributum.

reveals to us the qualitative nature[1] of an otherwise hidden substance to which we refer it.

It is apparently with a view to establishing the rational necessity of the irreducible, presuppositionless character of an attribute, and also to identifying attribute and substance, that he lays down the proposition: "Every attribute of substance must be conceived through itself."[2] This language, it will be observed, is the same as that employed in the definition of substance. If we take it to mean that attributes are in respect of qualitative content absolutely heterogeneous, it is intelligible. But if we are to understand that they are absolutely presuppositionless in the sense that the same language is employed in the definition of substance, it is unintelligible; for the very idea of attribute, as Spinoza himself generally assumes, presupposes a correlative (a substance) to which it is attributed. Moreover, as in this case all distinction between attribute and substance would be removed, it would be tantamount to expressly positing as many separate substances as there are attributes. Nevertheless, it is certainly his intention by this proposition to identify attribute with substance not only in qualitative but in formal nature also. Attribute must be, like substance, underived, self-contained, independently existent; for according to definition it expresses the nature (*essentia*) of substance.[3] The circumstance

[1] Cf. Epis. 9, where attribute is explained as *certa talis natura* attributed to substance.

[2] Eth. I, prop. 10.

[3] Eth. I, prop. 10, dem.—Attributum enim est id, quod intellectus de substantia percipit tanquam ejus essentiam constituens; adeoque (per def. 3 [i. e., per def. substantiae]) per se concipi debet." Another proof of the proposition lies in the fact that all attributes of substance are

that one attribute (*extensio*) has nothing in common with another attribute (*cogitatio*) and may therefore be said to be conceived through itself as regards qualitative nature, is taken to mean that it is conceived through itself absolutely. Intelligible motives for thus identifying attribute and substance, in spite of the contradiction involved, will appear as we proceed.

It seems therefore that the word "*essentia*" in the definition of attribute may, after all, mean more than we have expressed above in our paraphrase by "qualitative nature;" it may mean "qualitative nature and self-existence." But whether we think the more limited or the more extended meaning, it is impossible to save the unity of substance; for, in any case, we have incommensurable attributes, each of which expresses truthfully the ultimate nature of substance. The one substance posited above on other grounds now resolves itself inevitably into an aggregate of substances. Though Spinoza does not see the contradiction involved in his representations, he feels it as a difficulty, and seeks to defend his thought at length against possible objections. But his defense consists only of unclear explanations, which, in the light of the later philosophical development, are seen to be vacillations between the realistic and phenomenalistic standpoints. Extension and thought are different "ex-

co-eternal and none of them therefore are produced by others; but if one involved the idea of another, they would be related to one another as cause and effect (Pars I, Ax. 4). It will be observed that the dem. assumes that two things of related nature *necessarily* stand in relation of cause and effect, which does not follow from "the knowledge of an effect involves a knowledge of cause."

pressions'' of the same substance: ''thinking substance and extended substance are one and the same substance, which is comprehended (*comprehenditur*) now under one attribute and now under the other. So also a mode of extension and the idea of that mode are one and the same thing, but expressed in two ways.''[1] This language was occasioned apparently by the circumstance that the content of an idea corresponds with its object, or, to speak in the terminology of the time, that an idea contains *objective* what exists *formaliter* in the thing. According to this way of thinking, substance ought to be the common content of extension and of its idea, which content exists, however, neither after the manner of extension nor after the manner of idea, but after the manner of substance. Yet how the common content of extension and of its idea existing after the manner of substance can be anything else than just extended substance, is inconceivable; for that common content is simply extension. From the standpoint of realism, therefore, the phrase ''expressed in two ways'' turns out to be incomprehensible. In fact it is intelligible only from the standpoint of phenomenalism. For the agreement of an idea with its object can not be a ground for the assumption that they literally constitute the same substance; it would indicate at most that they have a common source, of whose nature we can say nothing more than that it is so constituted that it can produce both thought and extension. And Spinoza often seems vaguely to conceive of substance thus as the unknown unit that is to be postulated as the condition of the two

[1] Eth. II, 7, schol.

heterogeneous attributes. But when so thought, it is neither extended nor thinking; neither attribute represents its real nature, for if one does, the other cannot, since they have nothing in common. This way of thinking, therefore, though it is scarcely more than an implicit tendency with Spinoza, contradicts the realistic sense of his doctrine of attributes, according to which an attribute constitutes the very essence of substance. Moreover, all these explanations presuppose, what contradicts his general teaching, that an idea can represent nothing but the extended; for every idea must agree with an extended object as its *ideatum*, else the assumed common content vanishes. Further, they ignore altogether the infinite number of other attributes. As soon as we take these into account, a more serious difficulty arises; for every attribute must agree with all the rest in the same way that thought agrees with extension, because they all are only different "expressions" of the common substance; the idea, for example, of an other attribute than extension would have the same content as the idea of extension. Consequently all attributes, except the attribute of thought, would have to be conceived as extension. This is not the only connection in Spinoza's thinking, as we shall see, where the infinitely numerous unknown attributes threaten to be swallowed up in extension.

Some of the expounders of Spinoza have undertaken to show that his doctrine of attributes is consistent with the unity of substance. To discuss in detail the different attempts would be too tedious. That of Johann Ed. Erdmann is the most worthy of consideration, inasmuch as he renounces from the

beginning all hope of being able to think the inconceivable. The expression *quod intellectus de substantia percipit* contained in the definition of attribute, he interprets as meaning that attributes are only subjective modes of thought, the mind's way of looking at the one identical substance. They are not to be regarded as objectively real constituents of substance; they are only so many appearances. This view he finds supported in particular by Epistle 9, where Spinoza explains that by attribute he means the same as by substance, "except that it is called attribute in respect of the mind which ascribes a certain nature to substance."[1] Spinoza goes on to illustrate his meaning by two examples showing how the same thing may properly be called by two names: (1) By "Israel," is to be understood the third patriarch, and by "Jacob," the same person, but with reference to the fact that at birth he had hold of his brother's heel. (2) By a "plane" he understands that which reflects all rays of light without mutation; the same thing is meant by "white," except that it is called "white" with reference to the man who looks at the plane. This sounds at first reading very much like the language of phenomenalism. But it is certain that Spinoza never aims to be a phenomenalist;[2] he is always in intention a thorough-going realist. Knowledge for him is knowledge of reality in the most literal sense of the term; although he has not always been able to adhere to his standpoint with entire

[1] . . . . nisi quod attributum dicatur respectu intellectus, substantiae certam naturam tribuentis.

[2] Herbert Spencer, however, has classified him as such. Cf. First Principles.

consistency. This fact in itself, that an interpretation of the passage in the sense of conscious and express phenomenalism, would place it in sharp contradiction with the tenor and complexion of his whole system, has generally been considered a sufficient objection to Erdmann's view. But Spinoza's language, read in the light of his manner of thinking, will be seen to be consistent with his realism. When he says that attribute and substance are but different names for the same thing (and this is really what he says), he does not mean that attribute is less objectively real than substance, but that the *distinction* between the two is only a logical one, a *distinctio rationis*.[1] Attribute and substance cannot be separated, though they may be distinguished in thought, attribute applying to substance in its qualitative aspect. In objective reality there are no attributes existing apart from substance. Neither does he mean that the distinction between one attribute and another attribute is a mental fiction (what Erdmann's interpretation would assume); for he is not speaking of the relation of attributes to one another, but of attributes to substance. These cannot be separated any more than Israel and Jacob, or than the whiteness of the plane and the plane itself. But they may be distinguished in thought, attribute referring to substance in its qualitative aspect, just as "Jacob" applies to Israel, though referring especially to the patriarch's posture at birth. This would be quite in harmony with Spinoza's realism and particularly with his

[1] Cf. Cog. Met. Cap. V, Notice, however, that what he says here about distinctions between different *attributes* applies only to the so-called moral and metaphysical attributes discussed by theologians.

complete identification of attribute and substance noticed above. The example of the plane, it should be observed, is also to be thoroughly divested of the phenomenalistic associations of a later time, and be regarded as illustrating precisely the same point as the example of Israel and Jacob, namely, the unreality of the *distinction* between "plane" (as defined by Spinoza) and "white," but not the unreality of "white."

Kuno Fischer, in an earlier edition of his well-known "Geschichte der neuern Philosophie" attempted to illustrate by an example the possibility of thinking the heterogeneous attributes as constituting one substance. In his illustration empty space plays the part of substance, and a series of mutually exclusive geometrical figures that of the attributes. On account of the criticism of Camerer[1] he has omitted the illustration from the later editions of his work. It applies obviously only to the relation between attributes and modes, and not to that between substance and attributes. Nevertheless he still holds that Spinoza's thought is consistent.[2] But even if we admit with him that substance is to be conceived only as efficient cause and the attributes accordingly as underived, ultimate "forces," it still remains impossible to save the unity of substance. Efficient cause means force; first efficient cause means the ultimate force. If now the ultimate force (substance) be thought as a universal, the particular ultimate forces (attributes) become mere modes; for they have something in common with one another and are no longer conceived each through

[1] Die Lehre Spinozas p. 6.

[2] Vol. I, Part 2, p. 366.

itself alone. But if, on the other hand, substance (the ultimate force) is not thought in a more general sense than the attributes, the one ultimate force resolves itself inevitably into a plurality of independent ultimate forces.

It is worth while to point out the motives in Spinoza's presuppositions and in his self-imposed problem which occasioned the unclear conception of the relation between substance and attributes. It will then appear that he could not do otherwise than conceive it contradictorily, and that accordingly all attempts to make him consistent at this point must be fruitless, so long as we do not ascribe to him thoughts that are not his.

One occasion of his way of thinking lay, as mentioned above, in the Cartesian doctrine of attributes which he uncritically accepted in the main. By Descartes the presuppositionless properties of things (*extensio* and *cogitatio*) were distinguished by the name "attributes" from the other properties, which were called "accidents" or "modes." An attribute represented the ultimate nature, *essentia*, of the corresponding substance; *extensio* that of material substance; *cogitatio* that of thought-substance. For him, therefore, "substance" and "essence," or "substance" and "attribute," could be synonymous terms without giving rise to any contradiction, because to each of the two substances belonged only one attribute (essence); but in the case of Spinoza, who had to do with several attributes belonging to one substance, the unquestioned Cartesian tradition could not but lead to the positing of a plurality of absolutely heterogeneous "essences," or ultimate natures, in a unity, i. e. to a contradiction.

If, further, we take account of Spinoza's self-imposed problem, it will be seen that he could not have given up the Cartesian view of attributes, even if he had wished to do so. For he aims to establish the existence of an ultimate reality of which all things are only modifications, i. e. to find an idea from which the ideas of all other things are deducible through logical determination; and he recognized (what some philosophers have not) that from the absolutely indeterminate[1] absolutely nothing can be derived. As he could not determine the nature of this ultimate reality *a priori*, he was content to start with the things known to our immediate experience and work backward by generalization. Accordingly the most general qualitative characters of Nature (*extensio* and *cogitatio*) he regarded as that which constitutes the nature of the Absolute. Otherwise it would have been impossible for him to derive therefrom the actual world of matter and mind. His ultimate being could not be other than a "real" one, i. e. one which, as to its qualitative nature, would admit of predicates belonging to the things of the actual world.[2] Spinoza

[1] See p. 128, where the sense of Spinoza's expression *ens absolute indeterminatum* is explained.

[2] De Intell. Emend. p. 30.—"'Unde possumus videre apprime nobis esse necessarium, ut semper a *rebus physicis*, sive ab *entibus realibus*, omnes nostras ideas deducamus, progrediendo, quoad ejus fieri potest, secundum seriem causarum ab uno ente reali ad aliud ens reale, et ita quidem ut ad abstracta et universalia non transeamus, sive ut ab iis aliquid reale non concludamus, sive ut ea aliquo reali non concludantur: Utrumque enim *verum progressum intellectus interrumpit.*" By "seriem causarum" as he explained, he means the "series of the fixed and eternal things," i. e., the series of common properties of things, arranged according to their relative universality. By "entia realia" he means the same. By "abstracta

was compelled, therefore, by the implicit aim of all his thinking so to conceive of the fundamental unit as to make it share in thought and extension. Each of these attributes, let it be observed, had not merely to pertain to the Absolute in some loose way, but to constitute its nature, its "essence," to be identical with it, whether this identity were capable of being clearly conceived or not. His earnest realism required nothing less. Spinoza could not posit a more ultimate reality than thought or a more ultimate reality than extension; for such a one would have been qualitatively undefinable, and thus have occasioned an impassable gulf for our cognition between the actual world and the absolute. And just because the unity of substance can not be thought without positing something above the attributes to mediate between them, Spinoza's representation of the relation between substance and attribute had to be contradictory. As often as the thought of that unity was really complete in his mind, he himself could not avoid thinking that more general something; though the true character of his mental operation was in great measure concealed from him by the circumstance that the *definition* of substance expresses a mere empty relation,[1] while mind and matter belong to the category of things. For as often as substance is conceived as a mere relation, in which matter and thought may both stand, one has at least a counterfeit of union, and of a union

et universalia" he means here those general terms that originate in the "imagination." For explanation of why he applies the word *causa* to the *entia realia* see p. 89.

[1] So also the designation of substance as "*ens*" (Cog. Met. I, Cap. 3) and as "absolute existence" (cf. p. 105).

too which does not presuppose anything "real" beyond those attributes.

The result of our examination of Spinoza's account of the relation between attribute and substance may be summarized as follows: The task that Spinoza set himself was to deduce the world from a *single knowable reality*; the accomplishment of the task, however, was rendered impossible by certain presuppositions. Hence the actual outcome was something else. If we accept the logical result of what he says in regard to *attribute and substance*, then he has traced all things back to a *plurality* of *knowable* realities. But if we do not press his fateful doctrine of attributes to its logical conclusion, and accept the asserted oneness of substance, this unit becomes unknowable, since it must lie beyond thought and extension. In this case the outcome is the tracing back of all things to two underived knowable phenomena of one ulterior, *unknowable* reality. "Phenomena" we say, and not "modes"; for different modes of the same thing must have something in common. It is possible that Spinoza would have expressly accepted this latter position, if his earnest realism had not stood in his way. In fact, the effort to combine a plurality of heterogenous attributes in a unity occasions a constant tendency toward phenomenalistic ways of thinking, and not infrequently his language threatens, in spite of himself, to express this point of view. *Ens, quatenus ens est, per se solum, ut substantia, nos non afficit.*[1] It is a condition of rightly understanding much of Spinoza's thought that we clearly recog-

[1] Cog. Met. Pars I, Cap. III. Cf. Eth. II, 7, schol.; Epis. 64 and 66.

nize his constant vacillation between realism and phenomenalism, neither of which he can consistently accept, although in intention he is unquestionably a realist. To assume that he is consistent will lead to serious misinterpretations.

For our particular task it is most important to have established that, for Spinoza, substance and its attributes are indistinguishable as regards their nature, and hence that the entire content of substance is contained in the sum of the attributes.

### 2. *The Significance of the Infinite Number of Unknown Attributes.*

For the sake of simplicity we have thus far taken little account of the infinite number of unknown attributes. Their relation to substance is of course the same as that of extension and thought; and the unclearness of this relation became, in the case of the unknown attributes, of the greatest significance for the shaping of the entire system. His starting from two irreconcilable assumptions, the oneness of substance and the absolute incommensurability of its attributes, has for a consequence difficulties and contradictions in the details of his system, which must have led to its reconstruction, if he had been able to doubt his first assumptions. From the one side he is compelled to maintain the absolute mutual exclusiveness of the modifications of different attributes; and from the other side he must secure the participation of each modification in the nature of substance, i. e., in the sum of all the attributes that constitute the essence of the one substance. Accordingly, since "thought substance and extended substance are one and the same substance," body and

soul as modifications of the one substance are one and the same thing, only "expressed in two different ways."[1] In reality, therefore, they are one and the same modification; but this modification, and every other one, "as it is in itself,"[2] must, as part of the substance consisting of an infinite number of attributes, be expressed not merely in two ways, but in an infinite number of ways.[3] Consequently everything possesses at bottom not only the properties that can be referred to matter and mind, but along with them an infinite number of other unknowable properties derived from the rest of the attributes. (Hence every thing is also expressed in an infinite number of ways in the "Intellectus Infinitus,"[4] which will claim our attention further on.) The question naturally arises: Why then can the human mind not discover the other attributes?[5] Man's ultimate nature must, according to this way of thinking, participate in all the qualitative determinations of the infinite substance; and, if the mind is only the nature of man expressed under the attribute of thought, why can it find in itself only ideas of the properties expressed in two attributes? To this question Spinoza can of course give no satisfactory answer.

The relation of these other attributes to "intellect" deserves to be noticed. They are defined to be

[1] Eth. II, 7, schol.

[2] Ibid.—Quare rerum, *ut in se sunt*, Deus revera est causa, quatenus infinitis constat attributis. Cf. Eth. I, prop. 16.

[3] Cf. Eth. I, prop. 16: Ex necessitate divinae naturae infinita infinitis modis (hoc est omnia, quae sub intellectum infinitum cadere possunt) sequi debent.

[4] Epis. 66.

[5] Cf. Tschirnhausen's letter; Epis. 65.

"whatever is able to be perceived by an infinite intellect as constituting the essence of substance."[1] Without giving a full account of the expression, "infinite intellect," which we have reserved for another place, it will suffice here to point out that they must sustain essentially the same relation to intellect as do extension and thought. They are such, therefore, as the human mind, if its vision were unbounded, would discover by following the same process as it has followed in the case of the two known attributes; i. e., they are all the positive, "real," *suo genere* infinite predicates that the mind would then be able to derive from the immediate objects of knowledge. It cannot be too much emphasized that when Spinoza speaks of ascribing all possible attributes to substance, he has no thought of fictitious creations of the imagination, or of abstractions, or of moral qualities, etc.; but only of properties which are the objects of possible perception. *Every attribute is concrete, "real," i. e., derivable from hard and fast reality.* None can be deduced *a priori* either from the conception of substance or from any other ground.

Before dismissing the subject of the attributes we would distinctly point out the great significance of Spinoza's conception of attribute for his idea of God. It is in fact indispensable, and in this circumstance lies another motive for his holding it fast, in spite of the difficulties in which it involves him. It enables him to give a definite nature to the Absolute without impairing its infinity. *Omnis determin-*

[1] Eth. II, 7, schol.—quidquid ab infinito intellectu percipi potest tanquam substantiae essentiam constituens.

*atio est negatio*[1] is a proposition of logic to which Spinoza attached great importance. It means that the more definite the meaning of a term, the less the number of objects to which it will apply; or, in the language of logic, increasing the "intension" diminishes the "extension" of terms. But if this is true, how can we speak at all of attributes (qualitative determinations) of the infinite, the all-inclusive? Of Spinoza's infinite (provided we admit with him its unity) we may very consistently do so. The character of each attribute is such that it has nothing in common with any other. On this account they cannot limit one another; for a limitation can occur only through a similar.[2] Each one, therefore, is infinite in its kind, and yet by its qualitative determination does not negative anything else. A plurality of *infinites* is possible only when they are absolutely heterogeneous. But out of such Spinoza has constituted an Absolute of infinite qualitative content, without violating the principle, *Determinatio est negatio.* But thereby, we repeat once more, he has logically though not consciously, destroyed the unity of the Absolute. It becomes only an aggregate of independent realities, each of which is infinite in its kind.

When Spinoza defines God to be the *ens absolute indeterminatum*,[3] he can consistently mean nothing else than what we have just described, a being that possesses all kinds of qualitative contents, each of which is unlimited in its kind, and in so far also indeterminate.

[1] Epis 50.
[2] Eth. I, def. 2.
[3] Epis. 50.

Some might be tempted perhaps to find a place among the infinite attributes other than *extensio* and *cogitatio* for all those which Christian theology ascribes to the Absolute. After what has been said, however, it will be seen that such an inclination would be misleading. If self-consciousness, knowledge, purposeful activity, moral qualities, etc., are to be claimed for the Absolute, they must be derived from the attribute of thought, which alone exhausts all the spiritual content of Substance. In how far this attribute fulfills the demands of the religious consciousness, will appear as we proceed.

But before we undertake to determine more closely the meaning of *cogitatio* and *extensio*, it is well to give an account of the relation that exists between substance (or attributes, if you will) and modes.

## CHAPTER IV.

## SUBSTANCE AND MODES: GOD AND THE WORLD.

Spinoza's aim, as determined in a previous chapter, is really double: (1) to comprehend all reality as qualitatively determinate pieces, so to speak, of the Absolute; and (2) to comprehend all reality *causally* as necessary effect of the Absolute. The two problems were never clearly distinguished in his thinking, a circumstance that greatly increases the difficulty of understanding him. The second one naturally occasioned him the most trouble.

He was compelled by his hypostatization of thought relations to regard the Absolute not only as eternal but as unchangeable. Any solution of his causation problem, therefore, was rendered impossible in advance by the character of the actual world. For the changeable and the transient cannot be understood as logical consequences of the eternal and unchangeable. Further, by his assumption that only infinites can result from infinites,[1] variety and multiplicity are also excluded. To be consistent, Spinoza should, like Parmenides, have regarded the changing and the manifold as illusion. His attempt to bridge over the chasm between the two antitheses could not but plunge him into obscurities and contradictions. Without following here his demonstrations in all their deviations, it will suffice

[1] Eth. I, 21.

to explain merely the character of the connection established between the infinite and the finite.

Spinoza's assumptions in regard to the nature of causality in general should not be forgotten. We saw that he presupposes that the same relation obtains between cause and effect as between premise and conclusion. The idea of the cause involves the idea of the effect and conversely the idea of the effect involves that of the cause. Through an illicit extension of this proposition he regards also, as often as it serves his purpose, anything as cause which happens to be presupposed by the idea of a given thing. Accordingly any condition is sometimes treated as cause. Extension, for example, being the only ultimate property of material substance, is that from which motion is assumed to result. It is space, the condition of motion, that is regarded as its cause. The general also is often treated as the cause of the particular, because the definition of the particular contains the idea of the general. No clear distinction is made between a changeless condition and a dynamic cause.

The most important declaration in regard to substance as cause is contained in the proposition, "God is the immanent, but not the transient, cause of all things."[1] This view was of course unavoidable, as it expresses the assumed unity (in some sense) of the Absolute and the world. In fact the immanence of the ultimate cause seems to have been simply postulated at first as a consequence of the already established unity of reality, and was only negatively defined as a "non-transient" relation. In the "Short Treatise," in a part where his thoughts

[1] Eth. I, 18.

are cast in the form of a dialogue between Love, Intellect, Reason, and Desire, Reason says to Desire: "You say then that the cause, in so far as it is the originator of the effects on this account must be outside of them, and this you say because you know of the transient cause only, and not of the immanent cause, which latter brings forth nothing at all outside of itself, as the mind, for example, which is the cause of its ideas. And therefore the mind is called by me a cause (in so far as, or seeing that its ideas depend on it); and again a whole, seeing that it consists of its ideas. So God also is for his effects or creatures no other than an immanent cause, and also a whole, in view of the second remark."[1] From this, taken literally, it would appear that the immanent "God" is nothing else than the sum of all things, but nevertheless the cause of all things. It is not improbable that this dialogue is one of the earliest of Spinoza's compositions. The language quoted, in so far as it can be construed, would almost warrant the assumption that according to Spinoza's original way of thinking, unmodified substance is only an abstraction, and that substance actually exists only as modifications, which taken together embrace the whole of reality. Another part of the "Short Treatise" (no doubt a later one), though repeating that God produces nothing outside of himself, clearly conceives of him in his causal relation as distinct from the sum of things, saying: "God is the proximate cause of the things that are infinite and immutable, of which we say that they

[1] Korte Verh. I, Cap 2, Zamenspreeking, p. 18. Cf. I, Cap 3.

are immediately created by him; but he is the last cause in a certain sense of all particular things."[1]

The proposition from the Ethics affirming that "God is the immanent cause of all things, but not a transient cause,"[2] is proved in two ways; first by showing that all things are "in God" in the sense that they involve the conception of God (substance), and secondly by showing that there is no substance outside of God, from which a cause from outside could arise. Here the immanent cause is identified with its effects, or modes, only in an accommodated sense,—in the sense that from its nature the effects can be logically deduced. From Eth. I, 28, scholium it appears quite clearly that no closer kind of unity than this is implied by Spinoza's *causa immanens*: "God can not properly be said to be the remote cause of particular things, unless perhaps for this reason that we may distinguish these from those things which he has produced immediately, or rather which result from his absolute nature. *For by remote cause we understand such a one as is in no way connected (conjuncta) with the effect.*" We may infer, therefore, that the meaning of "immanent cause" (non-remote cause), in certain relations, is filled out by one that is in any way connected with the effect.

For Spinoza's mature thought "God" the Absolute is an immanent cause only in the sense that he is in the world and does not transcend it,—in the sense that there are no miraculous incursions, creative or otherwise, from without the self-sufficient system of nature. *That "God" is the immanent cause of everything in the sense of being the immediate cause, is not his doctrine.* In his system, as truly as

[1] Korte Verh. I, Cap. 3. [2] Eth. I, 18.

in any other, there exist two distinct spheres; that of the conditioned, and that of the unconditioned; and they are connected only by a series of links in a chain. His thoughts concerning "God" as immanent cause may be expressed, in so far as they are definite, in three propositions: (1) The conditioned presupposes the unconditioned, upon which it depends; (2) The unconditioned—and this is the important matter—will bear the same predicates (extension and thought) that apply to the conditioned. (This is all that can be consistently made of Spinoza's saying that "God" produces nothing outside of himself); (3) The conditioned world can accordingly be deduced from the unconditioned. In harmony with this loose conception of immanence, the expression "in God" when employed by Spinoza does not generally mean "in the Absolute," as the uncritical reader would suppose, but only "somewhere in the system of nature."

Turning our attention now specifically to the way in which the chasm between the infinite and the finite is actually bridged over, we find that Spinoza, like the Neo-Platonists (in spite of the fact that his world-view is in many respects the antithesis of Neo-Platonism), posits a series of intermediate realities, but with no better result. Spinoza's intermediate realities are the so-called "infinite modes." Since every idea, as we saw, contains consequences, and since the "order and connection of causes is the same as the order of ideas," everything produces results, results moreover that are proportionate to itself. Accordingly that which is infinite produces infinite effects. Substance, therefore, must produce under each attribute an infinite creation,

an infinite "mode." From extension follows immediately "motion and rest." Since every immediate mode must be just as infinite as the attribute itself, there can be only one such mode for each attribute.[1] Consequently it must "express" the corresponding attribute in a particular way, and nevertheless be like the attribute, infinite.

The second step from substance toward the actual world is represented by the modes that result in turn from those of the first order. These modes (or "things") must, according to the assumption above-mentioned, also be infinite.[2] Apparently we are to understand that from these last flow still other infinite modes.[3] There are, as we said, only one mode of the first order for every attribute: the consequences of these immediate modes on the contrary resolve themselves each into a multiplicity. But a plurality (except of attributes) is not compatible with the infinity of the individual units, and, in order to overcome this difficulty he betrays here the tendency to take "infinite" in the sense of "eternal." What these last modes, "eternal things," are, is not clearly explained. We may safely assume, however, that all eternal things that are subordinate to the immediate infinite modes belong in this series. If we take account of the peculiarities of Spinoza's thinking, we may regard them as all the links in a system of relatively universal properties of empirical nature, a system in which these properties would appear as successively resulting determinations of the immediate modes, and ulteri-

[1] Eth. I, 21; Cf. Korte Verhand. I, Cap. 9.
[2] Eth. I, 22.
[3] Eth. I, 23.

orily of the attributes. Concrete examples are not given. Such a classification, projected but not yet worked out, is presumably what hovered before his mind when he spoke of an "intelligible arrangement" of things and of a *series rerum* [*causarum*] *fixarum aeternarumque.**

The ultimate class of "eternal things" is constituted by the "eternal essences" of the individual things of the empirical world. In treating these, Spinoza either takes account of the infinite number of attributes, and then a thing is a determination of the many-sided substance, i. e., the sum of an infinite number of qualities; or he ignores all attributes except extension and thought, in which case a thing is conceived as a specific modification of extension, "*objective*" reflected to be sure, in a corresponding mode of thought. After what has been said above, we may for the sake of simplicity take no account here of the infinite number of attributes.

It ought to be noted that the word "essence" with Spinoza does not always represent the same thing. Apparently it is sometimes thought as synonymous with quality, as when extension is treated as one of the essences of substance[1]; at other times it signifies what he has expressed in his definition: "I say that to the essence of any thing belongs that which when granted posits the thing, and when canceled cancels the thing." The examples given under the definition are taken from geometry, the essence of a triangle being the affirmation or idea that the sum of its three angles are equal to two right angles[2]. According to

* De Int. Emend. pp. 30-31. Cf. Eth. II, 18, schol.

[1] Eth. II, pr. 45, 46, 47, with demonstrations.

[2] Eth. II, prop. 49, dem.

this definition, extension cannot be called "essence" of substance,* for it can be conceived without positing the infinite substance at all, and be cancelled without making it impossible to conceive substance, thought substance being just as thinkable without extended substance as with it. Nor is extension the essence, in the sense defined, of particular kinds of bodies; for, although the abolition of extension would involve the abolition of bodies, the positing of extension would not posit the particular kind of bodies. But the essence would be that particularized extension that is peculiar to the kind of bodies in question, distinguishing them from all other objects. In short, essence corresponds to the content of a correct definition,[1] the generic characters being involved, but the distinctive characters being the ones that are emphasized.

As an essence is that which is expressed in the definition, and as this is an adequate idea, an "eternal truth," the essence also is sometimes called an eternal truth,[2] and is always in harmony with the principle of parallelism, regarded as eternal at least. Accordingly the essences of things have an existence

* It is possible that Spinoza's treatment of the incommensurable character of the attributes (see p. 114) was determined in part at least by the desire to approximate his use of the word essence in the definition of substance to his use of it as applied to the "essence" of things.

[1] Epis. 9 p. 223 . . . definitio . . . tatum circa rerum, rerumve affectionum *essentias* versatur. Cf. Thomas Aquinas, Sum. Theol. I, 29, Art. 3: Essentia proprie est id, quod significatur per definitionem.

[2] Epis. 10——Quod porro petis, anne res etiam, rerum affectiones, sint aeternae veritates? Dico, omnino. Cf. Heerebord, Meletemata, 307, I, where "aeternae veritates" means, aliquid reale extra intellectum.

of their own, eternal and independent of temporal existence.[1]

This is the way Spinoza conceives "essence" in that connection of his thought with which we have to do at present; but it would be a mistake to suppose that he is consistent in his use of the word.

We saw that true ideas, or definitions, of particular things are never immediately derived from the data of experience, but only deductively from the "universal things" (i. e., the common properties of things); that consequently these definitions presuppose an adequate knowledge of those properties; and that the faculty by which the particular things are to be derived is intuition. But it is difficult to see why ordinary reason is not regarded as capable of attaining this knowledge; especially as it possesses the power of determining the "universals," and of deducing from them clear and distinct ideas; and as the "essences" are only final links in the chain of "eternal things" of which the "universals" are the first. Possibly it was only after an unsuccessful attempt to reach them in this way, that Spinoza had recourse to intuition.

Although the "eternal essences" are certainly links in the chain of successive determinations of the attributes (or of substance), they are sometimes distinguished from the rest of the "eternal things;"[2] but as they are immediately related to temporal existences, this is not unnatural.

Whether the intermediate links between the at-

[1] Eth. II, 8, Cor., schol.

[2] This is the case in De Int. Emend. pp. 30-31. In order to obtain a correct notion of Spinoza's doctrine of essences, a careful study of this passage is indispensable.

tributes and the essences of particular things are numerous or not, cannot be clearly determined. We can with certainty say nothing more than that they constitute a "series."[1]

In the mediation between the infinite and the finite we have arrived as far as to the eternal essences of particular things; but we have not yet reached the changing and perishable world of sense. This last step in the process, constituted Spinoza's chief difficulty. In order to explain the temporal "existence" (the temporal origination and limited duration) of real things, he distinguished between the "absolute nature" of God (or of any attribute) and "God so far as he is modified by a modification, which is finite and has a limited existence." From the absolute nature of God, the eternal modes, including the eternal essences of particular things, necessarily result, and the eternal modes alone. But from God so far as he is modified by a modification that is finite and that has a determinate existence, results the temporal "existence" of things. On the one hand, we have the declaration that "all things which result from the absolute nature of any attribute of God must exist always and infinitely, or are through that attribute eternal and infinite;"[2] and that "what is finite and has a determinate existence can not be produced by the absolute nature

[1] In the *Korte Verhandeling*, Preface to Part II, note 7, he says that "each and every particular thing [body] which attains to actual existence, does so through motion and rest." This statement seems to ignore the existence of any other eternal modes than motion and rest. It must be regarded as an abbreviated expression, or we must assume that after writing the *Korte Verhandeling* he increased the number of eternal modes.

[2] Eth. I, 21.

of any attribute of God."[1] On the other hand, it is asserted that "each single thing, i. e., each thing that is finite and has a determinate existence, is not able to exist, or to be caused to act, except it be caused to exist and to act by another cause which also is finite and has a determinate existence; and this cause in turn is not able to exist or to be caused to act, except it be caused to exist and to act by another which is also finite and has a determinate existence; and so on *in infinitum*."[2]

Thus, to account for the changing and transient things of the sense world, Spinoza has recourse to a twofold causality,—a direct and an indirect. The direct is the source of the existence as such, the being of things, connecting them intimately with substance, the "absolute existence," by means of the "eternal essences" and other infinite modes, and is called the "power by which every thing perseveres in existing;" the indirect is the cause only of the temporal and ontological limitations of things. Both causalities are, in the last analysis, "God"; for the finite cause that determines a particular thing to exist and to act is "God, so far as he is modified, etc." In so far as he produces things through the direct causality, he is their proximate cause; in so far as he produces them through the indirect causality, he is their mediate or ultimate, "last,"[3] cause. Yet it would not be correct to call him the remote cause; for by a

[1] Eth. I, 28, dem.

[2] Eth. I, 28.

[3] According to Korte Verhandeling, Deel I, Cap. III, "God" is in one relation the proximate cause, in the other the last cause: "God is de naaste oorzaak van die dingen, die oneyndelijk zijn, en onveranderlijk . . . dog de laatste oorzaak is hy en eenig zins van alle de bezondere dingen."

"remote cause" Spinoza understands a cause that is "in no way connected with the effect."[1] But the arbitrary assumption of a double causality did not of course solve the difficulty. The possibility of the limited existence of things remains unproved; for, in order to explain it, Spinoza simply presupposes it. All that he says about the causal relation of the Absolute to the changing and transient reduces itself logically to this: The infinite substance can only produce what is eternal; but it has nevertheless produced also the transient. Spinoza could not avoid this contradiction, without abandoning fundamental assumptions which he regarded as indisputable.

Besides a limitation as regards duration, finite things suffer, as already hinted, an ontological limitation also. The essences of things do not, in fact, come to full realization in temporal existence, and this for the reason that through their interaction they are partially repressed, or enter a state of passivity.

We may here show how the peculiar existence attaching to the "eternal" essences independently of the temporal existence of things is to be conceived, and how these essences are related to the changing things of the sense world. Owing to the fact that the essences stand in relation both to the changeless eternal and to the changing temporal world, they are capable of two different states, so to speak. Before the origination of a thing as a part of the empirical world, its essence exists in one way; and after that origination, in another. These two states he could

[1] Eth. I, prop. 28, schol.—Nam per causam remotam talem intelligimus, quae cum effectu nullo modo conjuncta est.

not allow, to be sure, without contradicting his fundamental assumption that everything results with mathematical necessity from the changeless nature of the Absolute; for such a necessity makes all change, and hence all origination and passing away incomprehensible. All that is must always have been. The difference between the two states consists in the circumstance that the essence of a thing when it becomes a member of the empirical world "involves existence." It is really the idea of the thing, of course, that involves the idea of existence, i. e., I suppose, the idea of the thing possesses after the origination of the thing, characters like those which compel us to regard a perception not merely as a subjective thought, but as a part of the objective world. But although it is properly the idea that involves existence, two different states of the real essences must be assumed also; for every event and fact in the realm of thought has a counterpart in the realm of extension. With its entrance into temporal existence, therefore, every essence takes on a special form. To the element already given through the direct causality comes a new one through the indirect.

In order to prove the correctness of this interpretation and to illustrate other details of Spinoza's thought in this connection, it will be necessary to cite at length two important passages, one from the early "Short Treatise" and the other from the mature "Ethics." His specific aim in these passages is to elucidate the relation obtaining between the material essences and the thought essences at the moment when things emerge into temporal existence. "Yet it must be remarked," he says in the "Short

Treatise," "that these modifications [the material eternal essences], in view of the fact that no one of them is [yet] actual, are nevertheless continuously[1] contained in their respective attributes; and, as there are no inequalities (discreteness) in the attributes or in the essences of things, there can be no particularity in the Idea [Dei],[2] since there are none in Nature. When, however, some of these modifications put on their particular being and are thereby separated in a certain way from their attributes.... .....then there appear particularities in the essences of the modifications, and consequently in the thought essences which are necessarily contained in the Idea Dei."[3]

The other passage is "Ethics" II, 8: "The idea of those particular things or modes which do not exist must be comprehended in the infinite idea of God, as the essences of the particular things or modes are contained in the attributes of God." This proposition is established by a reference to the familiar principle that "the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things," and is followed by the corollary: "Hence it follows, that, as long as the particular things do not exist except so far as they are comprehended in the attributes of God, their thought being, or ideas, do[4] not exist except so far as the infinite idea of God exists; and when the particular things are said to

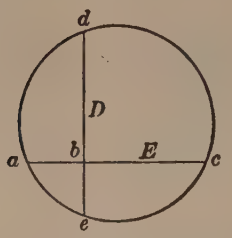
[1] Dutch, "gelijkmatig."

[2] The Idea Dei, as we shall see, is the sum total of thought essences; i. e., the Intellectus Infinitus.

[3] Korte Verhandeling, Aanhangsel, p. 102.

[4] I translate the Latin plural verb by the English plural so as to transfer the thought exactly as it lay in his own mind.

exist, not only so far as they are comprehended in the attributes of God, but so far also as they are said to have duration,[1] their ideas also involve the existence by which they are said to have duration." The thought is further elucidated by a scholium: "If any one should desire an illustration for the further explanation of this matter, I should not be able indeed to give any that would adequately explain the thing of which I speak, inasmuch as it is unique; nevertheless, I shall endeavor to illustrate it as far as possible. A circle is of such a nature that the rectangles constructed[2] from the segments of all straight lines which intersect each other within it are equal to one another; wherefore in a circle an infinite number of equal rectangles are contained; and yet no one of them may be said to exist, except in so far as the circle exists; nor may the idea of any one of these rectangles be said to exist, except in so far as it is contained in the idea of the circle. Now let two only of that infinite number, E and D, be conceived to exist. Their ideas also exist now, not only so far merely as they are contained in the idea of the circle, but also so far as they involve the existence of those rectangles; by which it happens that they are distinguished from the ideas of the rest of the rectangles."[3]




[1] *Durare*, the word employed to denote temporal existence.

[2] The Latin expression is *sub segmentis*.

[3] The obscurity of this passage has occasioned frequent misinterpretations. Sterne (Reclam Library) translates

From all this it appears: (1) That the material essence as well as the thought essence of a particular thing possesses an eternal existence which is independent of its origination in time; (2) That in this pre-actual state the two are related to each other according to the principle of parallelism, which is not violated by the temporal origination of the thing, a change occurring in the thought attribute that corresponds exactly to the change in the attribute of extension; (3) That each exists as a consequence (or product) of the attribute to which it belongs; and (4) That in their pre-actual state, they are not to be conceived as distinguishable individuals.

How the last two assumptions are more precisely to be understood is, at first reading, by no means clear. It is said that the eternal essences are "continuously," or "uniformly," contained in the attributes; that there are no "inequalities" in the attributes or in the essences; that, when any particular thing comes into actual existence, it is thereby distinguished, or separated, in some way from its attribute, and that "a particularity" at the same time appears in the essence. The geometrical figure serves to show further that, in the pre-actual state, the essences are related to their "attributes" after the manner of logical implications. From these expressions, one

*rectangula* by *Rechtecke* (rectangles) in the first half of the scholium and by *Dreiecke* (triangles!) in the second half. The English translation of Johann Ed. Erdmann's "History of Philosophy" misrepresents the German text by employing the word "rightangle" instead of "rectangle" (§272,4). This would leave out of account altogether the nature of the circle, which is essential to the illustration. The *rectangula* referred to can only mean the rectangles constructed from the segments a b and b c on the one hand and from d b and b e on the other.

would be inclined at first to infer that the eternal essences are after all nothing but the uniform substance which has not yet resolved itself into multiplicity, that they are contained in substance only in the sense in which all effects are contained in their causes, i. e., potentially. For it would seem that the essences are distinguished neither from one another, nor from the higher modes, nor from the attributes.

But this interpretation would certainly be mistaken. It would contradict Spinoza's assumption that the system of eternal modes mediates between substance and particular things; for the essences of things and the other eternal modes would stand in precisely the same relation to substance. It would in fact cancel the eternal modes altogether; for, as all differences between them and the attributes would be effaced, the expression "eternal modes" would no longer have any meaning. They would not be real consequences of the nature of the Absolute, but merely consequences that are not yet in any degree effectuated. One might perhaps call them "potential" modes, but yet only in the sense in which we may speak of unmodified substance as potential modes. The view would contradict also Spinoza's general assumption that all that is in substance as causal Nature must necessarily exist also as effectuated Nature, and would consequently remove every ground for his sharp distinction between Natura Naturans (substance) and Natura Naturata (totality of modes).

On the part of the Neo-Platonists, when seeking to portray the transition of the one World-ground into the multiplicity of the actual world, we find similar

modes of expression. Similar, I say, not identical; since the peculiarities of Spinoza's system, necessitated certain differences. Plotinus, for example, who conceived the νοῦς as at once "Thought" and "Being" shows many significant points of resemblance. "Inasmuch as the νοῦς is the highest Being, the five categories of the intelligible belong to it.....: being, motion, permanence (στάσις), identity, and difference. ..... The common reality which is more closely determined by the categories Plotinus calls the unlimited or intelligible matter. In it lies the ground for the multiplicity which the νοῦς has in itself in distinction from.... .....the Indeterminate that stands above Thought and Being, and by virtue of which [mulitiplicity] it resolves itself into the supersensible numbers, the Ideas, one of which must correspond not only to every species but to every individual, as the original image of its peculiarity . . . and since they are not separate from one another, but are in one another, yet without mixing, they unite also again into the unity of the intelligible world."[1] Something similar to Spinoza's expressions, but essentially different in meaning, may be found also in the scholastic disquisitions on the relation of God to the world.[2] If the passage cited from the "Ethics"

[1] Zeller, Grundriss d. Geschichte d. griech. Phil. pp. 288-9. Cf. Plotinus, Enneades I, VIII, 2— [ὁ νοῦς] ἔχει πάντα καὶ ἐστὶ πάντα καὶ σύνεστιν αὐτῷ συνὼν καὶ ἔχει πάντα οὐκ ἔχων. ὁυ γὰρ ἄλλα, ὁ δὲ ἄλλος· οὐδὲ χωρὶς ἕκαστου τῶν ἐν αὐτῷ· ὅλον τε γάρ ἐστιν ἕκαστον καὶ πανταχῇ πᾶν· καὶ οὐ συγκέχυται, ἀλλὰ αὖ χωρίς.

[2] The passages cited from Spinoza might be understood as an attempt to adapt the following thoughts of Heereboord's to his own system: In intellectu divino rerum essentiae fuerunt per ideas ab aeterno, antequam mundum creaverit . . .: in suis causis res dicuntur esse,

did not harmonize so well with the one from the "Short Treatise," which was composed several years earlier, one would be tempted to assume that here we have a borrowed way of thinking, or rather mode of expression, which he never entirely assimilated to his own thought. If he was not influenced from these sources, the similarities of expression are to be explained by the common difficulties of mediating between two antithetical worlds. But Spinoza had the peculiar difficulty also of guarding his *causa immanens*. This fact made it easier for him no doubt to employ in this connection language which veiled the differences between the Absolute and the immediately conditioned, i. e., between substance and the system of eternal modes.

But his thought is not unintelligible. It must not be overlooked that the illustration of the geometrical figure is not to be taken too precisely. He is trying to describe two different ways of existing and there is but one known to our experience, the only describable reality being an object of possible perception.[1] No illustration, therefore, could really illustrate; and he himself recognizes this fact, saying that as the matter is "unique" he can not "adequately" illustrate it. We must assume, therefore, that he does not intend here expressly to contradict what

quatenus sunt in illarum potentia activa . . .; sic rerum essentiae, antequam fuerunt in tempore creatae, fuerunt in potentia activa Dei ab aeterno; in seipsis extra causas suas dicuntur essentiae rerum esse, quando jam actu productae a Deo, aut potius, quando sunt productae: sic nullae essentiae ullarum rerum sunt aeternae.—Heereboord, Meletemata, 307-8—„De essentiis rerum aeternis."—That Spinoza had read Heereboord appears from Cog. Met. Pars II, Cap XII.

[1] I use the word perception here in a broad sense as including self-consciousness as well as sense-perception.

he has so plainly said elsewhere, and that he means to allow some kind of distinction between the essences and the higher modes, between these and the attributes, and between one essence and another, although not a distinction of the same kind and degree as between the actual world and the non-actual world. The eternal modes, as direct results of the absolute nature of "God," may be regarded as constituting a whole, a unit, when contrasted with the system of transient things that result from the indirect causality. It is not without propriety, then, that he speaks of a separation or distinction which takes place at the moment when a particular thing becomes a member of the actual world. The expression, "so far as they are contained in the attributes of God," cannot mean, 'so far as they are contained in the absolute nature of God,' but 'so far as through the direct causality they are members of the system of changeless and eternal consequences of the absolute nature of God.' In fact, the expressions "in God," "in an attribute of God," etc., are constantly employed by Spinoza to signify nothing more than 'conceived through the idea of God or of an attribute.'[1] In this sense, a body is 'in God,' or in an attribute of God, in so far as it involves the attribute of extension..... The 'separation of a modification from its attribute' must mean 'separation from the totality constituted by the attribute and the system of changeless consequences flowing from it.' The description of the essences in their pre-actual state as showing no "particularity"[2]

[1] Eth. I, 15, dem. I, 28, schol.; and frequently.

[2] This can mean nothing else than "discrete individuals."

is in harmony with the character of essences as the contents of true definitions; for a definition expresses the nature of a thing in sufficiently general terms to apply to all the individuals of a class that exist at different points of time and space, i. e., it takes no account of particular times and places which constitute the only necessary differences between individuals. In short, a definition expresses only the characters of the species, and does not logically imply plurality. Now since the essences are the last links in the chain of direct consequences of the attributes, we may express Spinoza's meaning more precisely as follows: Particular things of a given kind become actual when the uniform essence, which constitutes the content of the idea of the species,[1] is so affected by the indirect causality acting as *causa individuationis* that it exhibits a multiplicity of relatively discrete individuals. Accordingly the "distinction from the attributes" is, after all, only a dis-

[1] Eth. I, 17, schol. p. 53—Si unius [hominis] existentia pereat, non ideo alterius perebit; sed si unius essentia destrui posset, . . . destrueretur etiam alterius essentia. Cf. Eth. I, 8, cor. 2, where the essence is made synonymous with the *definita natura* of a thing, and is put in antithesis to individuals.

Since writing the text above, I have been gratified to find my account of Spinoza's oft-misunderstood doctrine of essences confirmed by so careful a scholar and clear a thinker as Prof. Fullerton. See his "Philosophy of Spinoza" (Modern Philosophers Series), p. 252, where he says: "Although, as we have seen, he uses the words essence and nature inconsistently, his fundamental thought, and one essential to his philosophical system, is that essences are not the result of an abstraction from the differences of individuals, but entities of a different class, eternal, unchangeable, independent of individuals; not mere abstractions, but real causes; in other words they are Platonized abstractions." It is to be hoped that the traditional habit of referring to Spinoza as a consistent Nominalist will soon be corrected.

tinction from the last direct consequences of the attributes, i. e., from the uniform eternal essences. He is seeking here to define the relation of the essences not to the absolute substance, but to the individual things of the actual world, and to describe the essences as they eternally exist in the Natura Naturata. That he is thinking about the Natura Naturata and not about the absolute nature of "God," appears also from the circumstance that *Idea* in the first citation and *Dei infinita idea* in the second can not be the *absoluta cogitatio*, but only the Intellectus Infinitus,[1] i. e., the sum of the ideas of all things and hence the thought side of the Natura Naturata.[2]

This account of the matter leaves a place for that which Spinoza has expressly and repeatedly declared, namely, that the eternal modes, just because they are modes and are conceived through something else, are different from the absolute nature of "God," indeed are to a certain degree antithetical to it, that they stand at unequal removes from it,[3] and that the essences of particular things are

[1] See below under "Idea Dei," p. 186.

[2] That the eternal essences are something more general than particular things, appears also from the distinction which the Korte Verhandeling makes between the Natura Naturata *Generalis* and the Natura Naturata *Particularis*. VI, Cap 8. It appears likewise from the fact that individual things are called 'particular' in distinction from the essences.

[3] Eth. I, Appendix, p. 68—Nam, ut ex propositionibus, 21, 22, et 23, constat, ille effectus perfectissimus est, quia Deo immediate producitur, et quo aliquid pluribus causis intermediis indiget; ut producatur, eo imperfectius est.—In the cited propositions 21, 22, and 23 not the indirect but the direct causality is under consideration; for the question is of distinctions among the eternal modes.

mediated by the other eternal modes. To allow this definite distinction between the eternal modes, and to separate in a certain way substance from its products, is not forbidden, as might be suspected, by his doctrine of immanent cause; for his immanent cause when strained becomes, as we have seen, only a cause that *is in some way connected* with the effect.[1] And it should be observed that the eternal modes constitute a connected system, and, although distinct, they must not be conceived as spatially remote from one another. In interpreting Spinoza we may not take account of any world beyond the immediate one, and hence we are bound, I suppose, to conceive these modes as in a state of mixture, so to speak, though not in a state of solution.

He sometimes uses the word *essentia* in the sense of a qualitative content, and, owing to the necessity of recognizing the existence of transient individuals, he is constrained to apply it also to the nature of any individual thing actually existing,[2] an essence then involving the actuality and individuality of the thing. Consistently these essences cannot, as material existences, be eternal, but must pass away with the things themselves whose natures they constitute. As logical conceptions, though essences, they might be regarded as sharing the timeless character of all logical relations, and, therefore, as eternal.[3] When employing the word "essences"

[1] Eth. I, 28, schol.

[2] Eth. III, 57.

[3] But in so regarding them, one ignores, of course, the change which, in harmony with the principle of parallelism, must take place in the thought attribute, and which Spinoza has been at such pains to explain in the passages just discussed. He confounds habitually idea as logical content and idea as psychical fact.

as applying to the natures of individuals actually existing, he is logically compelled to regard the inadequate ideas along with the adequate as belonging to the essence of the human mind. But this also involves an inconsistency; for the inadequate ideas, as we saw, belong to the mind only in so far as it is in a passive relation i. e., only in so far as its proper nature (essence) is suppressed by the interference of other finite existences. These inconsistencies in Spinoza's account of essences are quite intelligible, however, forming as they do, only a part of the mass of contradictions occasioned by the impossibility of uniting in his system the eternal and the temporal, the changeless and the changing. It ought to be observed also that the shifting meaning of the word frequently conceals from the uncritical reader and from Spinoza himself fallacies of far-reaching consequences.

Our discussion of his doctrine of causality would be incomplete for our purpose, if we did not add something more definite in regard to necessity. According to Spinoza all being and all happening result with mathematical necessity from the nature of substance. "In the nature of things there is nothing contingent, but all things are determined by the necessity of the divine nature to a certain mode of existing and of acting."[1] Anything is said to be contingent for no other reason than that we do not know its cause.[2] Accordingly the freedom of the will, in the sense of indeterminism, is an illu-

[1] Eth. I, 29.
[2] Eth. I, 33, sch. 1.

sion.[1] "Men think they are free" because they are conscious of their actions and are ignorant of the causes by which they are determined."[2] The only freedom that exists is a kind of necessity; for "that thing may be called free which exists by the necessity alone of its nature, and by itself alone is determined to action; but necessary, or rather compelled, that which is determined by another thing to exist and to act in a definite way."[3] "God" is in this sense a free cause, but in this sense only. Any other being cannot, strictly speaking, be free even in this sense.[4] Nevertheless a freedom similar to that of the Absolute is inconsistently attributed to man in so far as he is determined by his own nature alone, and not by outward causes.

The free activity of "God," however, we should erroneously conceive if we thought of it as in any way conditioned by thinking. The principle of parallelism excludes such a view; for the attribute of thought cannot contain anything ideally ('*objec-*

[1] Saisset's assumption (Oeuvres de Spinoza, Introduction) that Spinoza in the 43rd letter, where he seeks to vindicate himself from the charge of godlessness, (insincerely) repudiates the doctrine of determinism, which he contends for everywhere else, is based upon a misunderstanding. The passage runs as follows: Quare ad ejus conclusionem transeo; ubi ait, mihi nullum superesse argumentum quo probem, Mahumetum non fuisse Prophetam verum. Quod quidem ipse ex meis sententiis conatur ostendere; cum tamen ex iisdem clare sequatur, eundem impostorem fuisse: quandoquidem libertatem illam, quam Religio Catholica, lumine naturali et Prophetico revelata, concedit, quamque omnino concedi debere ostendi, ipse prorsus adimit. "Libertatem" here refers to freedom of thought, not to the doctrine of free will.

[2] Eth. II, 35, schol.

[3] Eth. I, Def. 7.

[4] Eth. I, 17, Cor. 2.—solum Deum esse causam liberam.

*tive*') before that thing exists *formaliter* (as objective reality). "Hence it follows that the real being (*esse formale*) of things which are not modes of thought does not result from the divine nature because he previously knew it."* Accordingly "God's" thinking has so little to do with his creative activity that material things have a certain primacy. Indeed we may here remark, what has generally been overlooked in studies of Spinoza, that in his system, matter always takes logical precedence to thought wherever ontological and cosmological questions come into the foreground. An illustration of this fact we have just seen in the way in which the relation between thought essences and the real essences is described. For purpose in the activity of the Absolute there can of course be no place. "Mathematics, which has nothing to do with ends, but only with the essences and properties of figures, has shown men another norm of truth."[1] It would not be a difficult task to show "that Nature has no predetermined end, and that all final causes are only human figments."[2]

After the foregoing examination of the relation between the infinite and the finite in Spinoza's system, we are in a position to consider the distinction already referred to between Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata. In this we have another case of the accommodation of familiar traditional conceptions to his own system. Of both he gives the following explanation: "By Natura Naturans, is to be understood by us that which is in it-

* Eth. II, 6, Cor. Cf. Eth. I, 32, Cor. 2.

[1] Eth. I, Appendix, p. 68.

[2] Ibid.

self and is conceived through itself, or such attributes of substance as express an eternal and infinite essence, that is God so far as he is considered as a free cause. But by Natura Naturata I understand all that which results from the necessity of the divine nature, or of any one of the attributes of God, that is all modes of the attributes of God so far as they are considered as things which are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God."[1] Natura Naturans, it is clear, is the name applied to substance, or, in other words, to the sum of the attributes. The meaning of Natura Naturata is not so clear. In the "Short Treatise" he had subdivided it into Natura Naturata Generalis and Natura Naturata Particularis, the former being the system of eternal modes resulting from the absolute nature of "God," and the latter the system of particular actual things. The logical grounds for the distinction still exist in the "Ethics," though the distinction is not expressed. It has been assumed[2] that the definition above quoted identifies the Natura Naturata with Natura Naturata Generalis of the earlier work, to the exclusion of the Natura Naturata Particularis. If he described it as comprehending only the modes which result "immediately"[3] from the divine nature or result from the "absolute"[4] nature of God, there could be no doubt as to the correctness of this assumption; for this is the language employed exclusively to distinguish the system of modes produced by the direct

[1] Eth. I, 29, sch.
[2] Johann E. Erdmann in his "History of Philosophy."
[3] Eth. I, 28, schol.
[4] Eth. I, 21-28.

causality from that produced by the indirect. But it will be observed that Spinoza says nothing of the kind. What he says is that Natura Naturata embraces "all that results from the necessity of the divine nature," i. e., "All modes of the attributes of God so far as they are considered as things which are in God and can neither be nor be conceived without God." But this is language which Spinoza constantly employs in regard to all modes without distinction, whether eternal or transient. "All things are determined by the necessity of the divine nature to exist and to act in a certain way."[1] In Eth. I 28, scholium, where he is speaking in particular of the relation of both eternal and temporal modes to the Absolute, he expressly says in reference to "particular things:" "But all things that are, are in God, and so depend on God, that without him they can neither be nor be conceived."[2] From others the eternal modes differ only in that they are "immediately" produced by God, i. e., result necessarily from his "absolute" nature. Moreover, it would be difficult to discover any occasion for excluding the system of particular things from Natura Naturata. It must be a part of nature;

[1] Eth. I, 29.

[2] If it be objected, therefore, that *quatenus* ("so far as") in Eth. I, 29, schol. quoted above, implies a distinction between the modes here mentioned and other modes which are considered as things which are not in God and can be conceived without God, it may be replied that no such modes exist for Spinoza. In this passage he is making a distinction between causal nature, the unconditioned, and caused nature, the conditioned, and is not concerned in anyway with a distinction between one part or aspect of the conditioned and another part or aspect of the same. *Quatenus* could in fact be as well translated by "inasmuch as" as by "so far as."

and, if it does not belong to Natura Naturata, where does it belong? Certainly not to Natura Naturans. To ignore it entirely, would have been to fall into an "Acosmism" which no one will seriously attribute to him. The circumstance that the connection between the eternals and the temporals is not logically established, does not deter him from *asserting* the connection all the same. In fact, the defective logical connection between the two systems was probably the reason for obliterating a distinction that only made the chasm more noticeable and obtrusive. We should naturally suppose, in the absence of conclusive evidence to the contrary, that, when in the "Ethics" he omits the adjectives *generalis* and *particularis*, the logical extension of the noun Natura Naturata remains unchanged, covering what before were two subdivisions.

It deserves to be plainly pointed out that, owing to the distinction between the absolute nature of God and the rest of reality, which is "in God," Spinoza is led to apply the word "God" to two different objects. Sometimes "God" means total reality[1]—substance with its modes, especially with modes in so far as they result from the direct causality. The *ens absolute infinitum*, when thought according to logical extension and taken strictly, could not but embrace everything that exists. Viewed in one way, modes (the conditioned) are the antitheses of substance (the unconditioned); viewed in another way, however, the antithesis disappears, for they are after all only modified substance. At will, there-

[1] Eth. I, 28— . . . Deo, vel aliquo ejus attributo sequi, quatenus effectum est modificatione, etc. Eth. II, 7, Cor.—sequitur in Deo, etc.

fore, he can regard everything as a part of "God." This becomes all the more easy, as the expressions, "conceived through the idea of God" and "in God" are treated as synonymous. But at other times, "God" means only unmodified substance, the unconditioned, the Absolute, that which is conceived through itself alone.[1] This is the meaning that has been embodied in his definition of God, and is the one which corresponds to the designation *causa prima*. Since the Absolute only can be regarded as God in the proper sense of the term, it is with Spinoza's view of the Absolute that we have to do, when endeavoring to determine the religious significance of his system. His application of the term "God" to two quite different objects has led to serious misinterpretations.

From the preceding exposition of the relation of cause and effect in Spinoza's cosmology, it has appeared that, in his attempt to deduce the finite and transient from the infinite and eternal, the assumed *causa immanens* becomes in fact a sort of *causa transiens*; for the Absolute produces that which is essentially different from itself. Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata are assumed of course, as the common word of the two expressions implies, to be the same thing in two different aspects. They are nevertheless to a certain extent antitheses. Spinoza's pantheism does not go so far as to deny the existence of the finite and temporal, although this would be, as we saw, the logical consequence of certain presuppositions. Time is related to the imagination, to be sure, and the transient is only in-

[1] Eth. I, definition 6; Epis. 2; Epis. 4; Epis. 50; Eth. I, 17, schol.

adequately known; but change is nevertheless real. The connection between the finite and the infinite is a loose one, and, for Spinoza, must remain a loose one so long as they possess opposite characters. All reality can of course be classified as substance and modes of substance; but the modes are so far removed from original substance that they possess scarcely anything in common with it. The assumption that "the thing caused differs from its cause precisely in that which it has from the cause," and consequently that "a thing which causes both the essence and the existence of another thing, differs from this both in respect of essence and in respect of existence,"[1] is of no less significance for Spinoza's world-view than is the other oft-quoted and apparently irreconcilable proposition that "things which have nothing in common cannot be the cause one of another."[2]

It will next be our task to examine more closely the two known attributes and to determine, if possible, the exact meaning of the familiar terms "extension" and "thought," when they are applied to the Absolute.

[1] Eth. I, 17, schol.

[2] Eth. I, 3.— The two expressions are reconciled below. See page 214.

## CHAPTER V.

## THE CONTENT OF THE ATTRIBUTE OF EXTENSION.

When the conception of attribute was under consideration, it appeared that to every attribute of substance must belong the formal character of infinity, i. e. it must be infinite in its kind, and hence indeterminate, uniform, simple, etc. The common space idea indisputably possessed these characters, with the exception of simplicity. If a spatial quality was to be attributed to the attribute, therefore, it was necessary to repudiate the traditional doctrine of the divisibility of space, and to establish its simplicity. Hence his statement that "extension is an attribute of God, or God is an extended thing"[1] is coupled with arguments calculated to show that, although bodies are divisible, extended substance is not.[2] If it could be divided, it would not be infinite; since from the division several finite substances would result. In his "Metaphysical Thoughts" he had admitted, to be sure, that extension can be divided;[3] but in this work, as is well known, he did not frankly express all his own convictions. Elsewhere extension is always unequivocally represented as in its ultimate nature indivisible. Only as it exists in the imagination can it be otherwise regarded. When we consider it as it is *in intel-*

[1] Eth. II, 2.
[2] Eth. I, 13, schol.; I, 15, schol.
[3] Cor. Met. I, Cap II.

*lectu,—quod difficillime fit,*—we are able to reach the insight that it is simple. His ground for the indivisibility of extension seems to be the circumstance that space, as we have it in our thought, is a *continuum*, and cannot be so divided into parts that there will be no space intervening between the parts.[1] Space which is in this sense indivisible represents the character of extension as an attribute of substance. Extended substance, then, must so exist that no empty space is possible.[2]

In its qualitative character the attribute of extension, or extended substance, is not to be thought of as like any of the various things perceived by the senses. It is only an inference from the modes of extension, which are alone objects of immediate knowledge. But in spite of the fact that it is declared to differ from particular bodies in being indivisible, it is spoken of as *substantia corporea*[3] and as "stuff."[4] It is therefore to be conceived as indeterminate matter posited as the original material, pre-condition and cause of particular bodies. Bodies themselves are not substance, but "express" the nature of substance "in a certain and determinate way."[5] The most that can be said about its qualitative character is that it is so constituted as to be the ground and cause of the material universe. As it is "infinite" it is, for Spinoza, also "perfect."

[1] Eth. I, 15, schol.
[2] Cf. Cog. Met. II, Cap X, p. 223.
[3] Eth. I, 15, schol.
[4] Korte Verhandeling, 1, 9. Dutch, "Stoffe."
[5] Eth. II, Def. I.

## CHAPTER VI.

## THE CONTENT OF THE ATTRIBUTE OF THOUGHT.

The often misunderstood, but after all by no means uncertain, conception of *absoluta cogitatio*, we will do well to approach by considering in advance two things that are liable to be confounded with it. The first is the

### 1. *Intellectus Infinitus.*

This was a traditional conception which had originated in the speculations of Plato and Aristotle. It had played an important rôle in both Jewish and Christian thinking through the middle ages down to the beginning of the modern period. Spinoza simply adapted it to his own system.

Occasionally, by a sort of accommodation to traditional terminology, the expressions *Intellectus Dei* and the like are employed by him to designate absolute thought. This is the case in Eth. I. 15, schol., for example, which we shall have occasion to explain in another connection. It appears indisputably clear, however, from a number of passages, that Intellectus Infinitus properly denotes not absolute thought, but a certain definite mode of thought. "By intellect we do not mean absolute thought, but only a certain mode of thought,"[1] he

[1] Eth. I, 31, dem.

says in the "Ethics." A letter to Simon De Vries declares still more emphatically, if possible, the same thing: "I think I have demonstrated clearly enough, that intellect, although infinite, belongs to Natura Naturata, not properly to Natura Naturans," that is, according to Spinoza's distinction[1] between Natura Naturata and Natura Naturans, not to the Absolute.

When we seek to determine how this mode is more precisely to be conceived, we find that it is involved not only in the inconsistencies resulting from Spinoza's unclear use of "idea," but also in those which characterize his reconciliation of the infinite and the finite. Moreover, we here move on the outer limits, so to speak, of his sphere of thought, where details have to be deduced from scattered and fragmentary expositions. We may conveniently begin with Eth. II. 11:

"*Prop.*—The first thing that constitutes the actual being (*esse*) of the human mind is nothing else than the idea of some particular thing actually existing [existing in time].[2]

"Dem.—The essence of man is constituted of certain modes of attributes of God; namely [among others] of modes of thinking, of all which *idea* is by nature the most primary [prior]; and, when this is given, the other modes (namely, those to which "idea" is prior by nature) must be in the same individual. And so an *idea* is the first [most fundamental] thing constituting the human mind. But not an *idea* of a thing non-existent [in time]. For in that case (by cor. prop. 8) the *idea* itself could not be

[1] See p. 156.

[2] Cf. Korte Verhand., Anhang.

said to exist; therefore it will be an *idea* of a thing actually existing. But not of an infinite thing; for an infinite thing must necessarily always exist; but this is absurd. Therefore the first thing that constitutes the actual being of the human mind, is an *idea* of a particular thing actually existing.

"Cor.—*Hence it follows that the human mind is a part of the infinite intellect of God;*[1] and accordingly when we say the human mind perceives this or that, we say nothing else than that God,[2] not so far as he is infinite, but so far as he is expressed by the nature of the human mind, or so far as he constitutes the essence of the human mind, has this or that idea. And when we say God has this or that idea not merely in so far as he constitutes the nature of the human mind, but in so far as at the same time with the human mind he has also the idea of another thing, then we say the human mind perceives a thing *ex parte*, or inadequately."

The expression "essence of the human mind" is equivalent, of course, to "nature of the human mind," and means the qualitative content of the mind as a part of reality. As he is here thinking of individual minds as ideas of particular actual bodies, the "essence" becomes in fact the nature of the

[1] The italics are ours.

[2] Here we have a good example of the accommodated use of the word "God" to which we have referred (p. 158). It is employed in the sense of the sum of all modes. "God, not so far as he is infinite, but, etc.," means a single mode. The qualitative uniformity of reality makes it possible for Spinoza at one time to conceive of an "absolute" extension and thought, calling it "God," and at another time to speak of the sum of the modes, or of any one mode, as "God," inasmuch as every mode is, so to speak, a piece, though a modified piece, of the same stuff.

actual mind as including both adequate and inadequate ideas. The meaning of the rest of the corollary is at first not quite obvious. Strictly speaking, "God" cannot be taken to mean either the Absolute or total reality; for, in either sense, the expression "in so far as at the same time with the human mind he has also the idea of another thing," would have no meaning, since "God" in either sense, if he had any ideas at all, would always have ideas of other things at the same time that he would have that constituting the human mind. But the language could be made intelligible, if we should qualify "God" by "within the limits of the human mind," thus bringing the expression into harmony with his frequent use of "God" for any part of reality; and if we should then recall Spinoza's doctrine of inadequate ideas. These, as we saw, are, from one standpoint, to be regarded as "confused;" they report something of the nature of the human body and also something of the nature of the bodies by which the human body is affected, but the two elements are an indistinguishable mixture. The expression "God has the idea of something else at the same time that he has that constituting the human mind" would accordingly mean, "reality within the limits of the human mind" (i. e., simply the human mind) has the idea of something else at the same time that it has the idea of its own body; or, in other words, it has an inadequate idea. This explanation would be in complete accord wth Spinoza's account of sense perception.

The fatal objection to it is, that it views the inadequate ideas from an altogether different standpoint from that from which Spinoza is here regard-

ing them. The last clause of the corollary shows that he is thinking of them, not as confused, but as incomplete, mutilated, as *ex parte* knowledge. We should seek to interpret the passage in harmony with this fact. This becomes possible by paraphrasing it as follows: When we say that the human mind apprehends this or that, we say nothing else than that God, not so far as he is infinite, but so far as he (reality) is included within the limits of that mode called the human mind, has this or that idea. And this we may say, whether the idea in question is adequate or inadequate; for, if the idea is inadequate (incomplete) as it appears in the human mind, it is complete when referred to God (totality). The fragment lying within the circumference of the human mind belongs to him, as well as does its complement which lies beyond that circumference. In such a case, therefore, it may be said that God possesses the idea, not merely in so far as he constitutes the human mind (has the idea of the human body), but in so far as he constitutes some other mind (has the idea of something else) within the area of which falls the complementary part of the inadequate idea. With reference to the human mind, the idea may appropriately be called *ex parte* knowledge.

That which particularly concerns us at present is the circumstance that the inadequate ideas are here attributed to God in such a way as to indicate that the human mind in its whole circumference is a part of the Intellectus Infinitus. Quite in harmony with this fact, the Intellectus Infinitus is evidently conceived as the sum of individual minds regarded as the *ideas* of changing, perishable ob-

jects. The "hence" which connects the corollary with the preceding demonstration excludes the possibility of any other interpretation.

In Ethics V. prop. 40, scholium, we have the Intellectus Infinitus referred to again: "Our mind, in so far as it understands (*intelligit*), is an eternal mode of thinking, which is determined by another eternal mode of thinking, and this again by another, and so on *in infinitum*, so that all together constitute the eternal and infinite intellect of God." The expression "our mind in so far as it understands," means the mind in so far as it is intellect in distinction from imagination and feeling; in so far, therefore, as it is an aggregate, or a system, of adequate ideas only. "Determined" cannot mean anything else than conditioned or limited, for in the case of "eternal" modes there can be no question of producing in temporal succession. Accordingly the Intellectus Infinitus would be the sum of all adequate ideas in the entire realm of reality in so far as these are eternal, i. e., changeless thought counterparts to eternal and changeless "real" modes.

We seem thus to come upon an account of the Intellectus Infinitus that is inconsistent with what we have just learned from Eth. II. 11. There it was conceived as composed of individual minds taken in their whole circumference; here it seems to embrace human minds only in so far as they are "intellect." There a constituent mind was the idea of a body "actually [temporally] existing," and not of anything that "must necessarily always exist," as this would be "absurd;" here each constituent mind is an "eternal" mode. The two ac-

counts cannot be wholly reconciled; but, in so far as the difference is real, it can be explained as a natural consequence of the indeterminate meaning for Spinoza of the word "idea."

In the first place, Spinoza does not always distinguish between ideas as they exist for logic (ideas as content, meaning) and ideas as they exist for psychology (ideas as events). Because from the standpoint of logic they are relatively fixed, he regards them, as often as he has occasion to do so, as permanent possessions of the mind. In reality, of course, no idea exists for any mind except while it is being thought. No mind contains ideas as a permanent possession in any other sense than that it can re-think, re-create, them, or, to speak more exactly, think new ideas with the same logical content as that of ideas previously thought. Spinoza does not clearly see this, and hence, as often as it serves his purpose, regards logical conceptions as permanent facts. Especially if they are true, is this the case; for, on account of the circumstance that they cannot then be altered by subsequent correction, and can never become invalid, they are considered as even "eternal." Again, as a result of his assumption that all things are *animata*, the "idea" of a given body may mean either its soul or the idea of that body formed by any knowing subject. Spinoza, as we have seen, habitually confounds the two.

With these peculiarities of Spinoza's thinking in mind, it is possible to understand the differences between the two passages cited above. We have seen that the eternal "essence" of the human mind (which must be distinguished from its actual being,

*esse actuale* referred to in Eth. II, 11)[1] is something more general than particular individuals, that it is common to them all, that it is derived by the direct causality from the attributes, and constitutes the immediate background on which individuals, created by the indirect causality, appear as transient particularizations at different points of time and space. It is described as existing only so far as it is "comprehended in the infinite idea of God,"[2] i. e., only so far as it is qualitatively derivable from *cogitatio*, and partakes of existence in general,[3] but not *cum relatione ad tempus et locum*;[4] and is said further to be contained uniformly or evenly (*gelijkmatig*) in the whole,[5] individuals in their pre-actual state not being *a reliquis distinctae.*[6]

Now if we will conceive this essence of human minds as not merely a concrete entity, but, in harmony with Spinoza's psychological intellectualism, as also "clear thought," "truth," "intellect," rationality; the individual minds, in so far as they are constituted of adequate ideas, are in content co-incident with the common essence of all minds, which is, as we have seen, an eternal mode; and we can understand how Spinoza, mistaking this coinci-

[1] But what is called *esse actuale* in Eth. II, 11 is also called *essentia* in Eth. III, 3 and 9. The *esse actuale* is not the eternal essence, but the temporal essence. Cf. Eth. II, 8.

[2] Eth. II, 8, Cor.

[3] Eth. V, 30, dem.—Res igitur sub specie aeternitatis concipere, est res concipere, quatenus per Dei essentiam involvunt existentiam. "Ut entia realia" means in so far as things have a qualitative content. On the meaning of existentia here, see Eth. II, 45, scholium.

[4] Eth. V, 29, Scholium.

[5] Korte Verhandeling, Opera III, 102.

[6] Eth. II, 8 and 9.

dence for identity, would regard the adequate ideas possessed by a particular mind, though transient, as a part of the eternal Intellectus Infinitus. But in this view what becomes of the inadequate ideas, which were treated in Eth. II. 11 as also parts, though mutilated parts, of the Intellectus Infinitus? As we shall see further on, they are frequently said to perish with the body. But this may be so understood as to appear compatible for Spinoza both with the assertion that only adequate ideas are parts of the Intellectus Infinitus and with the assumption that inadequate ideas are also parts, fragmentary parts, of the same; for he could say that these mutilated ideas which result from individualization, perish only in the sense that when the individual perishes the mutilation vanishes, this having existed in fact for the individual only. Viewed in connection with the totality of thought, mutilated ideas are whole, adequate, true, eternal. We shall therefore always regard the Intellectus Infinitus as the system of adequate and eternal ideas.

As the human mind is the idea of a highly composite object, its eternal essence would consistently be a complex idea,[1] i. e., a system of ideas, each of which has for its object one of the constituents of the human body.[2] As all human bodies are composed of essentially the same constituents, all human

[1] Eth. II, 15. Idea, quae esse formale humanae mentis constituit, non est simplex, sed ex plurimis ideis composita.

[2] As the essence of any body is a certain ratio of motion and rest, the essence of the composite human body ought to be represented by a very complex formula, the various elements of which represent its constituent parts. In the "Short Treatise" (Deel II, Voorreeden, notes 12-14) where he suggests that the nature of the human

minds would, in their fundamental and eternal nature, be composed of the same ideas, namely the adequate ideas[1] of these constituents.[2] Upon the dissolution of an individual body, the associated mind would also lose its individuality, the single constituent ideas persisting in connection with the different substances that had composed the body. The mosaic of adequate ideas (if we may resort to spatial imagery) would remain intact; the fragments which had appeared in the vanished individual mind as inadequate ideas, would be completed by their complementary parts, while the adequate ideas of the same would remain unchanged (in content). No change has taken place except the discontinuance of the *ex parte* appearance in the particular mind. But the same ideas re-appear, some adequately and some inadequately, in new individuals,

body might be expressed by the formula 1:3, either he did not think of the matter very precisely, or else he meant this for a general formula which in detail could be resolved into more complex relations.

[1] But they are not necessarily ideas of the objects in the sense that they have those objects for their content. Spinoza's unclear use of the word "idea" must be borne in mind, on account of which they are, or are not, ideas in this sense, according to the connection in which they are thought.

[2] Spinoza seems to conceive the contents of consciousness sometimes as "ideas" of physiological *changes* and sometimes as "ideas" of the components of the body. When their psychological character is prominent to his mind, they tend to become "ideas" of physiological changes; when their logical character is thought of, they tend to become "ideas" of the physical constituents. Eth. II, props, 11-17. In the "Short Treatise" (Deel II, Voorreeden, note 13) the physiological change appears in consciousness as "feeling." Analogous to this is his application of Eth. II, prop. 7, "Ordo et connexio idearum idem est, ac ordo et connexio rerum," both in the temporal and in the logical sense.

which in turn are replaced by others, and so on *in aeternum*. The only things that are alike at all times and in all minds are the ideas in so far as they adequately present themselves. As *ex parte* appearances, they will exhibit a great variety of differences.

The question now arises whether Spinoza conceives the ideas constituting a human mind as self-conscious after the dissolution of the body. The word "idea" performs so peculiar a function in Spinoza's thinking that it does not necessarily imply consciousness. When we reckon with his application of the word to the souls of all bodies, whether organic or inorganic, we are not warranted in supposing that it necessarily means more than a "real" object's psychical counterpart, which is not of the nature of a volition or of a feeling, but of a presentation, i. e., an exact reflection in some sense of the object. But as the ideas (souls) of inorganic bodies have their place in the thought system, we must conceive them also as in their eternal relation components of the Intellectus Infinitus. This view might seem to be excluded by the fact that in Eth. V. 40 Spinoza makes only the rational part of the human mind an element of the Intellectus Infinitus, and apparently assumes that sub-human minds do not partake of rationality. But if we remember that these minds also have their "eternal essences," which are necessarily "adequate ideas" in one sense at least, i. e., are exact counterparts of the bodily essences, the difficulty disappears. Now what grounds have we for assuming that these ideas, which are presumably unconscious in their temporal relation, are conscious in their timeless relation?

Spinoza uses no language that requires us to conceive of them in this way. The application of the word "idea" to the surviving elements of the mind after the dissolution of the body, therefore, would not be a conclusive reason for supposing them to be conscious. The view which presents the least difficulties seems to be this: After the dissolution of the individual body, the adequate ideas which composed its associated mind will survive as elements of consciousness only in the sense that their *content* will be repeated in successive individuals.[1] Of this, we shall have to speak more at length in another connection.[2]

In a previous chapter[3] we found that there exists a *series* of eternal modes. The question arises, therefore, where in this series does the Intellectus Infinitus belong? The question is answered in a letter to C. H. Schuller. The young friend had asked for examples of modes immediately produced by God and of modes produced mediately through these.[4] Spinoza replied: "Examples . . . of the first kind are in Thought Intellectus absolute Infinitus; in Extension, Motus et Quies; but of the second

[1] The Intellectus Infinitus must therefore be considered as conscious in so far as it is coincident with actually existing minds, but this does not imply unity of consciousness. Whether it is conscious also in so far as it transcends the sum of individuals, or whether it does transcend the sum of individuals, is a question to be answered, if at all, by inference.

The Intellectus Infinitus may be represented to the imagination as analogous to a sea with a many-colored surface when the wind (indirect causality) strikes it into a multitude of choppy waves. The waves represent the individuals, in which some colors appear entire (adequately) and some in part (inadequately).

[2] See the chap. on Immortality.

[3] See p. 139.

[4] Epist. 63 (olim 65).

kind, Facies Totius Universi, which, although it varies in infinite ways, remains always the same; concerning which see schol. 7 of the lemma before proposition 14, Part 2."[1] The Intellectus Infinitus is then an infinite mode of the first order. The same thing is affirmed also by the "Short Treatise." As to Intellectus in the thinking being, it is . . . . also a Son, a Creature, or immediate product of God."[2] To find the essence of the human mind and other ultimate eternal modes related without intermediate modes directly to the Intellectus Infinitus, an eternal and infinite mode of the first order, is not what we should expect. This apparent inconsistency has its analogue in another of which we must now speak.

The letter just cited names only one mode of the second order, Facies Totius Universi. It has been inferred that this is a modification, not of extension alone, but of nature as a unit, a modification therefore which partakes of the qualities of both (or of all) attributes. But that this is not the case, is clear from Eth. II. lem. 7, schol., to which Spinoza refers his pupil for further light.[3] The expression *tota natura* found there is evidently synonymous with *facies totius naturae* occurring in the same connection, and relates only to extension. It requires therefore a counterpart on the side of thought, which is not given either here or elsewhere.[4] It would seem that, in regard to the eternal modes in general,

[1] Epist. 64 (olim 66).

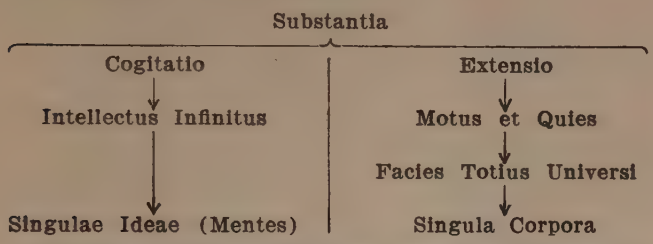
[2] Korte Verhandeling, Cap. 9, Deel I.

[3] Et si sic porro in infinitum pergamus, facile concipimus, totam Naturam unum esse Individuum, cujus partes, hoc est omnia corpora, infinitis modis variant, absque ulla totius Individui mutatione.

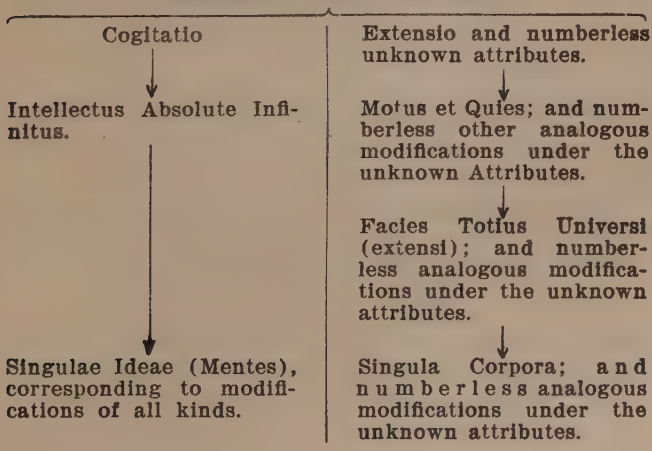
[4] Kuno Fischer's Diagram (Geschichte d. neueren Philosophie, II, 414, fourth edition) is therefore mistaken.

Spinoza never worked out the details of his thought into consistency. From the point of view of parallelism it would have been consistent for Spinoza to posit a special Intellectus Infinitus (an intellect relatively infinite) comprehending all particular minds actually existing and all particular ideas as psychological events. It would have had its counterpart in the *facies totius universi* of the "Ethics," which "varies in infinite ways" without altering its total value, and in the Natura Naturata Particularis (Extensa) of the "Short Treatise;" while the Intellectus Infinitus in another sense, embracing all eternal modes of thought, would have reflected the Natura Naturata Generalis. That he mentions no such special Intellectus Infinitus is probably due to the same motive that caused him to suppress the original distinction between Natura Naturata Generalis and Natura Naturata Particularis,—it would have emphasized the chasm (already too obtrusive) between the system of eternal modes and the system of particular things, a chasm that was especially inconvenient in the thought-realm, inasmuch as Spinoza was interested in putting actual human minds in close relation with the realm of eternal and changeless realities. His failure to distinguish clearly between ideas as logical content and ideas as psychological facts served him well at this point, permitting him conveniently to do, in the thought-realm, what he could not easily do in the extension-realm, namely, to unite the changing and the changeless worlds. By treating the ideas of actually existing minds as logical content only, he was enabled to obliterate the distinction between the two.

The relation of the Intellectus Infinitus, so far as we have now determined it, may be represented by the following simple diagram.




For the sake of simplicity we have thus far ignored the infinite number of unknown attributes. When we take these into account, we must make important changes in our diagram. We must then regard the counterpart of the Intellectus Infinitus as "expressed" not only under the attribute of extension, but under an infinite number of other attributes. Accordingly its relation to remaining reality may be provisionally represented as follows:


Substantia: Infinita Attributa
Cogitatio
Intellectus Absolute Infinitus.
Singulae Ideae (Mentes), corresponding to modifications of all kinds.
Extensio and numberless unknown attributes.
Motus et Quies; and numberless other analogous modifications under the unknown Attributes.
Facies Totius Universi (extensi); and numberless analogous modifications under the unknown attributes.
Singula Corpora; and numberless analogous modifications under the unknown attributes.

It will be seen not only that the asserted equilibrium between extension and thought is destroyed, in that thought acquires an infinite preponderance, but also that consistently the human mind ought to be acquainted with the unknown attributes. For the mind is the expression of substance under the attribute of thought, and the modifications of *all* other attributes, not merely those of extension, are analogous "expressions" of the same substance. This obvious inconsistency was pointed out to Spinoza himself by his young correspondent Tschirnhaus:

"Whence it is seen to follow," he writes, "that that modification which constitutes my body, although one and the same modification, is expressed in infinite ways; in one way through thought, in another through extension, in a third way through an attribute of God unknown to me, and so on to infinity; because there exists an infinite number of attributes of God, and the order and connection of modifications seems to be the same in all. Hence the question now arises, why the mind, which represents a certain modification and which same modification is expressed not only in extension, but in an infinite number of other ways;—why, I say, it perceives only that modification which is expressed through extension, that is, the human body, and no other expression through the other attributes."[1]

The difficult position in which Spinoza found himself before this question was one more consequence of the unclearness, lying on the threshold of his system, in regard to the relation that obtains between the attributes and substance. Tschirnhaus's objection was valid; but, on account of the actual lim-

[1] Epis. 65 (olim 67).

itations of our knowledge, Spinoza was bound at any cost to hold fast his conception of the mind as *idea corporis*. Accordingly in his reply, he simply ignores the consequences which his friend draws from the *unity of substance*, and defends himself by reminding him of the *heterogeneity of the attributes*:

"But in reply to your objection, I say that, although each thing is expressed in an infinite number of ways in the infinite intellect of God, yet those infinitely numerous ideas with which it is expressed are unable to constitute one and the same mind (*mens*) of a particular thing, but an infinite number; although each of these infinitely numerous ideas have no connexion with one another."[1]

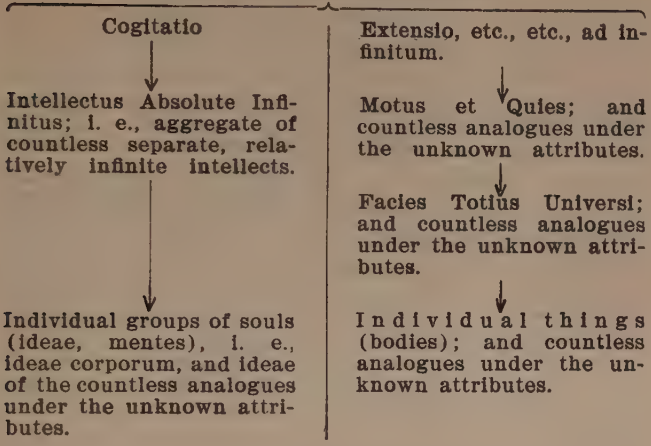
The statement that the ideas which represent things as they are "expressed" in the unknown attributes constitute countless minds of particular things, admits of but one explanation. If we conceive "thing" as a modification of the one substance, in the way Spinoza does here, we must attribute to every individual thing an infinite number of separate minds which reflect the countless coördinate "expressions" of the infinitely numerous heterogeneous attributes. Everything has therefore, not simply the one mind described as *idea corporis*, but an infinite number of others. On account of the novelty of the thought, one may perhaps be inclined to seek some other interpretation; but no other is possible. If we limit the word *mens* to *idea corporis*, and attempt to distribute the countless ideas of a given thing among different minds of this sort, we contradict Spinoza's fundamental assumption that *idea*

[1] Epis. 66 (olim 68).

*corporis* can only know extension and thought. Moreover, this letter, written two years before his death, harmonizes completely with the differently expressed representations of the "Short Treatise" composed in his youth, where he speaks of the nature of souls: "I say [the idea] of an object actually existing, etc., without further qualification, in order to include thereunder not only the modifications of extension, but also the modifications of all the infinite attributes, which just as well as those of extension have [each] a soul."[1]

As the ideas of the modifications of the different attributes have no relation (*nullam connexionem*) to one another, there exists corresponding to each attribute a separate Intellectus Infinitus. We must assume, therefore, an infinite number of relatively infinite intellects, which, taken together, constitute the Intellectus Absolute Infinitus. This suggests Spinoza's definition of God; and in fact it corresponds in a way to that "*ens absolute infinitum hoc est, substantiam constantem infinitis attributis.*" But it would be a mistake to suppose that it is the thought counterpart of the unmodified attributes. It represents only modifications of the attributes, and belongs to Natura Naturata. Its place in the system of reality is shown in the following diagram:

[1]Korte Verhandeling, pp. 101-2.—Ik zeg van een voorwerp dat dadelijk wesentlijk is, enz. zonder meer bezonderheid, om dan hieronder te begrijpen niet alleen de wijzingen van de uytgebreidheid, maar ook de wijzingen van alle de oneyndige eygenschappen, de welke mede, zo wel als de uytgebreidheid, een ziele hebben.—All this is a further confirmation of the assumption that souls and not literal ideas are the constituents of the Intellectus Infinitus.


Substantia: Infinita Attributa
Cogitatio
Intellectus Absolute Infinitus; i. e., aggregate of countless separate, relatively infinite intellects.
Individual groups of souls (ideae, mentes), i. e., ideae corporum, and ideae of the countless analogues under the unknown attributes.
Extensio, etc., etc., ad infinitum.
Motus et Quies; and countless analogues under the unknown attributes.
Facies Totius Universi; and countless analogues under the unknown attributes.
Individual things (bodies); and countless analogues under the unknown attributes.

The kind of unity possessed by this mode is especially to be remarked. As Intellectus Absolute Infinitus it falls, as we have seen, into an infinite number of absolutely separate Intellecti Infiniti, of which it is expressly said that they have no connection with one another. Still they are regarded as constituting one mode. The unity can be only that which may be predicated of an aggregate of units having a common root. The infinite parts are all derived from *absoluta cogitatio*, to be sure, but they have no direct relation to one another. But what unity may be ascribed to the separate Intellecti Infiniti? It ought to be that which obtains among the modes of any one attribute, and would be analogous therefore to that existing among different bodies. Here again the unity is only a community of origin. There is this difference, however, that in the case of the separate Intellecti Infiniti there exists a special homogeneity of qualitative content which he sup-

posed could not obtain between the thought modes corresponding to several heterogeneous attributes. The attribute of thought, which constitutes the ultimate ground of all thought-modes, is the unity to which they may be traced back. This, in which all single ideas, or *mentes*, mediately or immediately are rooted, establishes a union among them; somewhat as the trunk of a tree, if we may express ourselves in physical imagery, constitutes a union among the several leaves. This assumption is the only one, as we shall see, that can be harmonized with what Spinoza has to say about *cogitatio absoluta*.

We must next determine what he means by the expression *Idea Dei*.

## 2. *Idea Dei.*

In order to explain the relation of the eternal essences of things to the Absolute, we have already had occasion to take some notice of this conception. There it appeared that Spinoza's account of it was probably influenced not only by Neo-Platonic ideas, but also by scholastic speculations.

From this, however, it ought not to be hastily inferred that scholastic expressions employed by Spinoza retain their scholastic meaning. The scholastic discussions about the *idea Dei*, *idea in Deo*, etc., are to be understood in the light of the Aristotelian doctrine of form and stuff (or matter). According to this the form (εἶδος, *idea*) of a thing is at the same time its pattern and the goal of its development, and therefore also the measure of its reality. Stuff (ὕλη), on the other hand, is conceived as potentiality (δύναμις, *potentia*). When

now the scholastics applied these conceptions to God, they had to say that in God, the absolutely perfect being, there is no potentiality, but only complete realization of form (*idea*). He is *actus purus*; in him potentiality is swallowed up in reality. Hence the scholastic proposition: *Idea in Deo est ejus essentia,*——"form" in God is his essence. The question suggested by this proposition, whether we may then consistently assume a plurality of ideas in God, is answered by Thomas Aquinas by distinguishing the two senses in which the word *idea* is employed. If it is taken in the Aristotelian sense of form, *idea* must be regarded as only one in God; if it is taken to mean a presentation, then we must assert that the divine intellect contains as many ideas as there are different things. Thomas says, therefore: *necesse est ponere plures ideas* [*in Deo*],[1]—it is necessary to assume a plurality of ideas in God. Spinoza, in his "Metaphysical Thoughts," also takes notice of this scholastic question, answering it according to the requirements of his own system;

[1] Freudenthal, in his original and excellent essay on Spinoza and Scholasticism published in "Philosophische Aufsätze, Ed. Zeller gewidmet," §135, seems to assume that not only the scholastic phraseology, but also the scholastic conceptions have here passed over into Spinoza's philosophy. A proof of this he finds in Eth. II, 4, and refers to Thomas, "who, reasons like Spinoza (S. th. I, qu. 15, art. 2): Videtur quod non sint plures ideae [in Deo]. Idea enim in Deo est ejus essentia. Sed essentia Dei est una tantum. Ergo idea est una." In fact these expressions do not represent Thomas' own thoughts, but are only a fallacious argumentation which Thomas gives in order to refute it. He himself expresses the opposite opinion immediately afterward: "Respondeo dicendum, quod necesse est ponere plures ideae [in Deo]."

and, although his answer, like that just quoted,[1] is not determined by the Aristotelian doctrine of form, it is quite the opposite of that given by Thomas. Spinoza says there is but one idea in God. Hence Spinoza's language has quite a different meaning from what it would have if used by Thomas. In the mouth of Thomas it would mean, in God there is but one "form" of himself and that "form" is himself; while in this passage from Spinoza it means, in God there is but one idea, namely the idea of His unmodified essence, idea in a sense, however, which, in view of Spinoza's peculiar uses of the term, requires to be more closely determined.[2]

It has generally been assumed that the expression *idea Dei* is a proper name applied by Spinoza to a single object. But upon careful scrutiny this assumption is found to be mistaken. In fact the expression is employed in several senses, as we shall show.

We consider first some passages from the "Short Treatise." At the time when this work was composed, Spinoza held to a division of Natura Naturata

[1] Of course the Aristotelian doctrine is involved in all these scholastic discussions, more or less. God's ideas of things are conceived at the same time as being in a way the "forms" of the things. In relation to the creation and primarily, they are ideas; in relation to the created things, they are "forms."

[2] Cog. Met. II, Cap. VII, p. 218.—"Ad hanc [quaestionem] respondeo, quod idea Dei, per quam omniscius vocatur, unica et simplicissima est. Nam revera Deus nulla alia ratione vocatur omniscius, nisi quia habet ideam sui ipsius; quae idea sive cognitio simul semper cum Deo exstitit nihil enim est praeter ejus essentiam." In a letter to a friend Spinoza declares that in this work he has veiled his real convictions. We can see, however, from the words "simplicissima" and "ejus essentiam" that he is here describing *absoluta cogitatio.*

into two parts, the Natura Naturata Generalis and the Natura Naturata Particularis. "The General consists of all those modes which depend immediately on God . . . ; the Particular consists of all the particular things which are produced by the general modes."[1] Now it appears that a certain "Idea" mentioned in this work is the thought-counterpart of the Natura Naturata Generalis, and therefore corresponds to the Intellectus Infinitus. It is described as an "Idea" that mirrors the whole of nature as a sum of essences, but without "knowing" the particular things that come and go in time.[2] In the Appendix this "Idea" is described more fully:
"In the ninth chapter of Part I, I have called this Idea a creature immediately produced by God, since without increasing or decreasing it contains in thought form the real essences of all things." In the same connection he says that "in the Idea there is no particularity," i. e., there are no individual things such as occur at different points of time and

[1] Korte Verhandeling I, Cap. 8.—Incidentally, it should be remarked that this nomenclature confirms the view we have taken of the eternal "essences." As belonging to the products of the direct causality, they would be members of the Natura Naturata Generalia, and therefore something more general than particular things,—something like the hypostatized species. And it is to be noted that, although nothing is said in the Ethics about a Natura Naturata Particularis, there still exists the same distinction between general modes and particular things that appears in the Korte Verhandeling.

[2] Korte Verhandeling, Deel II, Preface, note 5—"Wy zeggen *wezentlijk zijnde*, omdat wy hier niet spreeken van een kennisse, Idea, etc., die geheel de natuur van alle wezen geschakeld in haar wezen kend, zonder haar bezondere wezentlijkheid, maar alleen van de kennisse, Idea, etc., van de bezondere dingen, die telkens komen te existeren.

space.[1] Now in the chapter to which Spinoza here refers the word employed is *Verstaan*, or, if we replace the Dutch word with the Latin one that doubtless stood in the original text, *Intellectus*; which is called an eternal and immediate creature of God. It is clear, therefore, that we have here to do with the Intellectus Infinitus, and that *Idea* in the above citation is but another name for it.

In the "Ethics" the expression *Idea Dei* is generally, but not always, used as a name for the Intellectus Infinitus. In the demonstration to proposition 21, Part I, for example, where he seeks to prove that all the consequences (products) of the absolute nature of God are infinite and eternal by reducing the contrary assumption to an absurdity, he takes the Idea Dei as an example of an eternal mode of the first order: "Conceive, if you can . . . , in some attribute of God something to result from his absolute nature, that is finite and has a determinate existence or duration, e. g., *Idea Dei* in the realm of thought." *Idea Dei*, therefore, designates here as in the "Short Treatise" an infinite mode of the first order, and so answers to the description of the Intellectus Infinitus. In discussing proposition 8, Part II, in another connection, we observed that *Dei infinita idea* can there also be nothing else than the Intellectus Infinitus.[2]

In other passages of the "Ethics" where the expression *Idea Dei* occurs, it certainly designates *absoluta cogitatio.* For example, in the corollary to the ever recurring proposition, "The order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and

[1] Korte Verhandeling, Aanhangsel, p. 102.

[2] See p. 151.

connection of things," *idea Dei* and *natura Dei* are put on the same plane: "God's power of thinking [of producing thought-modes] is equal to his real power of acting [of producing real things]. That is, whatever objective reality results from the infinite nature of God, results *ex Dei idea* in the same order and connection in God (in the totality) after the manner of thought."[1] It is sufficiently evident without comment, that *idea Dei* here represents primary, underived thought, the *absoluta cogitatio.* To regard it as a mode is out of the question.

We shall now be able to understand propositions 3 and 4, Part II., which have so often been either ignored or misunderstood.

"*Prop.* 3.—In God there is necessarily an idea as well of his essence as of all things that necessarily result from his essence.

"*Dem.*—For God is able to think (*cogitare*) infinite things in infinite modes, or to form the idea of his essence and of all things which necessarily result from it. But all that which lies in God's power is necessarily existent; therefore there necessarily exists such an idea, and (by prop. 15, Part I) nowhere else than in God."

One might be inclined to suppose that here we have a description of a single idea which has as its comprehensive object God's essence and everything that results therefrom.

The use of the singular of *idea*, especially in the demonstration, seems at first to confirm this interpretation. If so understood, it could be taken as the Intellectus Infinitus again, though not without some violence.[1] But when we recognize the parallel

[1] Eth. II, 7, Cor.

[2] The idea of God's essence would then be an idea in some finite mind, as the Intellectus Infinitus is, as we have seen, but the sum of thought-modes. But in this case there would be involved the inconsistency of sup-

between this proposition and proposition 16, Part I. ("From the necessity of the divine nature infinite things in infinite modes must result"), and when we note the form of expression employed at the beginning of the demonstration cited above ("God is able to think infinite things in infinite modes"); we see that Spinoza is speaking not of a single idea, but of an infinite number of ideas. The expression "in God" means here, as in many other passages, nothing more than "logically implying the Absolute," and may therefore be paraphrased as "somewhere in total reality;" for proposition 15, Part I., cited in proof of the existence of the ideas in God, says there is nothing that is not in God: *Quidquid est in Deo est.* The sense of the proposition in question, therefore, may be more fully expressed as follows: In the infinite universe there exists an idea (thought-counterpart) of the unmodified "real" essence of God and also an infinite number of thought-modes corresponding to as many modifications of his real essence.[1] (*Cogitare* is here used as we shall soon find, simply as a convenient term for psychic causation.)

Proposition 4, Part II. confirms the interpretation given to proposition 3, and furnishes another case of Spinoza's use of *Idea Dei* in the sense of *absoluta cogitatio*: "*Idea Dei* from which result infinite [thought] things in infinite modes, can be but one." He thus expresses only a consequence of the singleness of substance. In formulating this and the preceding proposition, Spinoza had in mind the scholas-

posing this element of the Intellectus Infinitus to be subjective instead of objective.

[1] That this is the correct interpretation of the proposition is shown also by the way the proposition is cited in dem. to cor. Prop. IX, Part II.

tic discussions above mentioned concerning plurality of ideas in God, and accommodates their language to the requirements of his own system in such a way that he is able to say, as Thomas did; in one sense, there is but a single *idea in Deo*,[1] and in another sense there are an infinite number. Probably he never uses the word *idea* for *absoluta cogitatio*, except for the purpose of assimilating his terminology to that of the scholastics, and of thus presenting his thoughts in the least offensive form.[2]

[1] It would be a mistake to assume that the word "idea" in this expression is to be understood as an idea in the ordinary sense of the term. In a letter written when a part of the Ethics was already in the hands of his friends, he contends that God may not be conceived sub idea. Ep. 9 (olim 27) p. 224.

[2] Viewed from the standpoint of mistaken assumptions, the demonstration to proposition 4, Part II, has been found unintelligible: "Intellectus infinitus nihil praeter Dei attributa et ejusque affectiones comprehendit. Atqui Deus est unicus. Ergo idea Dei, ex qua infinita infinitis modis sequentur, unica tantum esse potest." The significance of the expression "intellectus infinitus" here will be understood, if we turn again to proposition 16, Part I: "Ex necessitate divinae naturae infinita infinitis modis (hoc est omnia, quae sub intellectum infinitum cadere possunt) sequi debent." The words in parentheses (all things that would come within the range of an infinite intellect) are but Spinoza's expression for "all possible reality." In the demonstration to proposition 4, Part II, he uses "intellectus infinitus" in precisely the same way as here and evidently with reference to his use of it here. The demonstration may therefore be paraphrased as follows: There is no reality beyond God's attributes and modes. But there is but one God. Hence all real things have a single common origin, i. e., the real essence of God (*Dei essentia formalis*). Now all thought-things, being parallel to the real things, must also go back to a single common origin, namely to *absoluta cogitatio*, the thought part of God's absolute essence, that may be called *idea Dei*, from which infinite thought-things in infinite modes result. This proposition must not be taken as teaching anything new. It simply says, what was already evident, that *absoluta cogitatio* is one and not many. The language employed must be regarded as an attempt to express his thought in terms of scholasticism.

We have now made clear that Spinoza borrowed the expression *Idea Dei* from the scholastics, and accommodated it to his system; that in the "Short Treatise" he uses it only as a name for the Intellectus Infinitus; and that in the Ethics he employs it in two senses, first, for Intellectus Infinitus, and secondly, for *absoluta cogitatio.* The Intellectus Infinitus we have already explained. We come finally, therefore, to the *absoluta cogitatio.* From our study of this conception must issue the definitive answer to the question, whether Spinoza's system has a place for an all-embracing consciousness. The answer can be affirmative only in case the *absoluta cogitatio* can be conceived in one of two ways. It must be a kind of thought that either embraces all objects by consciously making the Intellectus Infinitus its own, i. e., by consciously thinking the single ideas of the Intellectus Infinitus; or attains in some other way, entirely independent of this, to an all-embracing knowledge. The latter alternative, however, may be ignored, as it is too fanciful to have been suggested by anyone. *For the Intellectus Infinitus is the immediate product of absolute thought, and, if absolute thought thinks in the real sense of the term, it must have the Intellectus Infinitus as the content of consciousness.*

### 3. *Absoluta Cogitatio.*

It has been assumed that with Spinoza, as with Descartes, consciousness belongs to the very essence of *cogitatio.* But as Spinoza has not defined[1] *cog-*

[1] Spinoza has not defined *cogitatio* for the reason that from his point of view definition was impossible. The most that he could say of absolute thought is that it is that which is presupposed by the finite modes of thought known to us in experience.

*itatio* and has characterized it only negatively, we are not warranted in making such an assumption in advance of careful investigation. We have noted a use of this and of kindred words such as *idea*, *cognitio*, *etc.*, that would naturally lead to an extension of the meaning of the term. The doctrine that all bodies, inorganic as well as organic, are "in different degrees" endowed with souls, would consistently have this consequence. So would also the tendency, growing out of his psychological intellectualism, to conceive these thought-counterparts as only the hypostatized intelligibility of the objects. But it would be perilous to argue from any single element of Spinoza's system to its ultimate consequences, and to say that these consequences were therefore held by Spinoza. This method of procedure is chiefly responsible for the prevalence of so many inaccurate, and even erroneous, statements of his doctrines. In order to prove that Spinoza intended to teach any particular view, it is not enough to point out assumptions of his from which the view could be deduced, but it is necessary to show in addition that the logical consequences of these assumptions have not been inhibited by the consequences of other assumptions which were for him more fundamental and important, and to cite language from him in which the given view is *expressly accepted*. Spinoza's system, as we have remarked in another place, is so far from being the chain of iron logic for which it often passes, that it is in fact a tangle of conflicting tendencies, many of which could not be granted full development and final recognition. If we should skillfully select our premises, though we stated them in Spinoza's own language, we could, by ignoring the

rest of his utterances, conclude to opposite doctrines in different cases. In seeking to determine the meaning of *absoluta cogitatio*, for example, we could select Spinoza's conception of *idea ideae*,[1] by which he explains human self-consciousness, and could say that just as the human mind, *idea corporis*, must be reflected in another *idea*, thus giving rise to *idea ideae*, or self-consciousness, in the same manner not only every thought-mode but even the thought attribute must be reflected in its corresponding *idea* and give rise to self-consciousness; and, as the attribute of thought contains in the form of logical implications all its consequences, a clear and adequate *idea ideae* in the Absolute would obviously be an omniscient self-consciousness. Thus, in the simplest manner possible, we could prove that Spinoza ascribes to the Absolute an all-embracing consciousness, — provided that, after arbitrarily choosing our starting point, we closed our eyes to everything else. The hypothesis seems to need no elaborate defense; the mere statement of it constitutes its proof. On the other hand, if we start from another and more fundamental assumption of Spinoza's, *omnis determinatio est negatio*, we can with equal or greater facility arrive at the opposite conclusion. We can say, in Spinoza's own language, that, as a consequence of this principle, God must be *ens absolute indeterminatum*,[2] on the thought side absolutely indeterminate thought. But in absolutely indeterminate thought there can be no determinate,

[1] See page 74.

[2] Epis. 36, (olim 41).—Deus est ens, quod non certo duntaxat respectu, sed absolute in essentia indeterminatum et omnipotens (infinite) est.

definite thoughts, no knowledge of anything in particular, hence no knowledge at all.[1] We can say, moreover, that this conclusion is in harmony with Spinoza's assumptions in regard to causation. We saw that in the attempt to discover the first cause of the immediate material world on the one hand, and of the immediate psychical world on the other, he constantly pre-supposes that the cause of a thing is that without which the thing cannot be thought. It is in accordance with this that in his cosmology the general is conceived as the cause of the particular. The absolutely first cause, therefore, he was compelled to find in the "*ens absolute indeterminatum*;"—on the side of extension, in something more general and indeterminate than any material stuff of the sense-world, in an absolutely indeterminate stuff; on the side of thought, in something more general and indeterminate than any known kind of psychical reality, in something more indeterminate therefore than even the psychical doubles of the simplest bodies, for these along with all other thought-modes "must be conceived through absolute thought." For mind (*mens*), therefore, for intellect (*intellectus*), for will (*voluntas*), and for real thoughts (*ideae*) in the Absolute, there can consistently be no place. All these terms must apply only to the thought-counterparts of particular bodies. Accordingly, mind properly so-called and *absoluta cogitatio* must represent opposite poles of psychical being.

[1] Kuno Fischer, accepting this conclusion, states it as follows: "Daher muss der Gott Spinoza's, wenn er als ein vollkommen unendliches und unbestimmtes Wesen gefasst ist, notwendig auch als ein selbstloses und darum unpersönliches Wesen begriffen werden" (Geschichte d. neuern Phil., Bd. I, 2ter Theil, S. 343).

And it is to be observed that, after all, this view may, in a way, be harmonized with Spinoza's doctrine of *idea ideae,* for, if it be inherent in the nature of an idea that it reflect itself in another idea, the reflection must be only in that degree of definiteness that characterizes the original idea. It is quite consistent, therefore, to declare that the idea which corresponds to the most complex and definitely individualized object, the human body, becomes in its self-reflection distinct self-consciousness; and, at the same time, to assume that less definite ideas, or "minds," are less distinctly self-conscious, that, in fact, minds of the lowest order are not self-conscious at all. The same would be true of an *ens indeterminatum* (the Absolute); self-consciousness would vanish in its own indefiniteness. It is to be remarked further that Spinoza is here occupied only with the human mind and its peculiarities, and does not consider the remoter consequences of his statements for his system as a whole. So true is this that he overlooks entirely the circumstance that his "*idea ideae,*" if followed out, quite destroys the assumed parallelism between thought and extension, giving an infinite preponderance to the thought series.

The second view is, therefore, decidedly the better founded; but, stated thus as a mere inference without the support of citations from Spinoza expressly accepting it, it would not pass unchallenged. The question is not to be settled by inference and speculation, but by exegesis. We shall therefore undertake to show not what he might have taught, but what he actually did teach, and this by citing his own language and, where its meaning is not self-evident,

by explaining it *in the light of Spinoza's own usage.* It will be found that he has expressly affirmed, in language that can not be mistaken, what the more fundamental assumptions of the system would lead us to expect, namely that conscious knowledge may not be predicated of the Absolute. In fact, nothing but the association of usual meanings with terms employed by Spinoza in a sense of his own, has ever given an air of plausibility, on exegetical grounds, to any other view.

It is worthy of remark that no systematic investigation of the specific question whether Spinoza's Absolute is to be regarded as intelligent or not, has appeared since the two important essays on the subject published in Germany half a century ago, which took no account of the "Short Treatise," one by J. H. Loewe[1] and the other by Trendelenburg.[2] Both undertook to establish the view that Spinoza conceives his Absolute on the thought side as an all-embracing intelligence; and they founded a tradition. Their conclusions are still accepted as plausible, and even as satisfactory,[3] and we must examine the principal grounds upon which they are based.

[1] Die Philosophie Fichtes. Mit einem Anhange: Ueber den Gottesbegriff Spinozas und dessen Schicksale. Stuttgart 1862.

[2] Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie, 1846-67.

[3] Recently by Joachim in "A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza," p. 72.—"God, in His being as a 'res cogitans' is thus aware of Himself and all that follows from Himself; and since all consciousness involves self-consciousness, since in thinking or knowing we necessarily know that we know, God is aware of His own thinking." As he here cites Loewe in a foot-note, we may suppose that he has followed him without a careful independent investigation of this point.

Loewe's presentation of the case is the most ample, and, though more definite in its description of the absolute thinking, agrees essentially with all others and is based on similar grounds. It may therefore be taken as representative. He assumes a three-fold thinking in the Absolute: "(1) The Intellectus Infinitus in so far as it is God's absolute consciousness of himself as absolute, i. e., his absolute self-knowledge as God; (2) The Intellectus Infinitus as that absolute divine thinking by means of which he comprehends the infinite totality of all finite things and their relations: (3) The intellectus infinitus, the single finite modifications of the divine thought-nature,—the finite mind and its thought-activities."[1] These now are supposed to be so related to one another that all different thoughts are consciously referred to a single subject, the Absolute mind. Accordingly, he further explains: "Every idea is not merely a real product, but, as the mode of an infinite real activity, namely of the thought attribute, it is also a real agent, although finite; consequently not simply something thought, but also something thinking,—a finite mind. When therefore God as infinite thought modifies himself to the determination A, and thereby the thought-thing A constitutes the finite mind, then we have to recognize in A something which God thinks and which it (the finite mind) at the same time is, in that God thinks it."[2]

It will be observed that this statement, by applying the word "intellect" to the absolute thought, entirely ignores Spinoza's warning, clearly expressed and frequently repeated even in the "Ethics," that

[1] Die Philosophie Fichte's, Anhang, S. 299.
[2] Die Philosophie Fichte's Anhang, S. 294.

"intellect" is a mode and cannot be predicated of the Absolute. These passages and the attempts to explain them away will be more conveniently considered in another place.[1] Spinoza might, no doubt, have constructed a system in which the relation of the Absolute to finite thoughts had been something like that described by Loewe; but that he did not, we hope to make quite clear, even if the "Ethics" alone be consulted.

His view was founded, as all similar ones have been, chiefly upon peculiar phraseology of which Eth. II. 3 may be taken as representative. Here it is said:

"In God there is necessarily an idea both of His essence and of all things that necessarily result from His essence.

*Dem.*—For God (by prop. 1 of this part) is able to think infinite things[2] in infinite modes, or (what is the same, by prop. 16, Part I) to form the idea of His essence and of all things which necessarily follow from it. But all that is in God's power necessarily exists (by prop. 35, Part I); therefore, there is necessarily such an idea, and (by prop. 15, Part I) nowhere except in God.—Q. E. D.

[1] See page 207.

[2] The Latin word which we have translated by "infinite things" is *infinita*. It does not here mean material things, of course, but psychical doubles of these. The sense of *infinita* is generally not precisely determined with Spinoza. It may mean infinitely *numerous* things, or things that are severally infinite in their kind. Sometimes one meaning is intended, sometimes the other; and not infrequently the word is used indeterminately. Here the sense is, "to think an infinite number of qualitatively different attributes each in an infinite number of different modes;" but, as the attributes are each infinite in its kind, it may be that Spinoza here uses the word *infinita* in the indeterminate way to designate them not only as infinite in number, but also as severally infinite in kind.

*Scholium*—The multitude understands by the power of God, God's free will and His authority over all things that exist, which are therefore regarded as contingent. For they say that God has power to destroy all things and to reduce them to nothing. Moreover, they very often compare God's power with the power of kings. But this we have refuted in Cors. 1 and 2 of prop. 32, Part I, and have shown in prop. 16, Part I, that God acts by the same necessity by which He thinks *(intelligit)* Himself; i. e., just as from the necessity of the divine nature follows (as all agree) that God thinks Himself, by the same necessity follows that God produces (or does, *agit*) infinite things in infinite modes. Then we have shown in prop. 34, Part I, that God's power is nothing but God's dynamic (active) essence [*actuosa essentia*]; and so it is as impossible to conceive of God's not acting as of God's not existing. Moreover, if it were permitted to pursue these matters further, I could here show also that that power which the multitude attributes to God is not only human (which shows that God is conceived by the multitude as a man, or as similar to a man), but even involves impotence. But I am unwilling to discourse of the same thing so often. Only I ask the reader again and again to ponder repeatedly what has been said concerning this matter from prop. 16 to the end [of Part I].[1] For no one will be able rightly to grasp what I mean, unless he takes care not to confound the power of God with the power and authority of kings."

We have already had occasion to show[2] that in this proposition we have to do not with one all-embracing idea, but with the "idea" of God's simple essence, along with an infinite number of other ideas which are its products (or consequences), that "idea of God's essence," being the original, underived psychical, must be the attribute of thought, *absoluta*

[1] In the Part referred to, he expounds and defends his doctrine of necessity.

[2] See above, p. 187.

*cogitatio*, and hence that the word "idea" is thus used as an accommodation to scholastic language. We have now only to inquire whether the words *cogitare, intelligere*, etc., were rightly taken by Loewe and others as proof of divine omniscience. So long as one remains under the influence of the letter, certain individual phrases in this passage seem to support Loewe's hypothesis. As a matter of fact, however, *cogitare* and *intelligere* in Spinoza's vocabulary do not always mean "to think." On account of the parallelism of his system, these words are often conveniently employed to describe psychical causation as distinguished from material causation, which is designated by *agere*; and they do not necessarily imply that psychical causation is conscious thinking. Here the causal process on the side of *cogitatio* is represented as an analogue of the causal process on the side of *extensio*; and both processes are, as we have seen, a conditioning or a producing in which, by a law of necessity, modes result successively one from another in a series ending in the most highly determinate. The Absolute, therefore, can "*cogitare infinita infinitis modis*" in the sense that from *substantia cogitans* result psychical modes infinite in number and kind, one corresponding to every mode produced by *substantia extensa*, and to every mode produced by each of the unknown attributes; but that the Absolute thinks in any other sense does not appear. Nor does it appear when we consult Eth. II. 1, to which reference is made in the demonstration:

Prop. 1.—Thought (*cogitatio*) is an attribute of God, or God is a thinking being (*res cogitans*).

*Dem.*—Particular thoughts, or this and that thought, are modes which express God's nature in a certain and determinate way. Therefore to God belongs an attribute the conception of which all particular thoughts involve, and through which they are conceived.

According to this language, God would be the cause of particular thoughts, not in the sense that he literally thinks them, but only in the sense that indeterminate thought is the presupposition of determinate thoughts, or, in other words of Spinoza's, that individual psychical entities and phenomena "express in a particular, determinate way" the general, indeterminate nature of God.

To understand *cogitare* here in the literal sense of conscious thinking is forbidden by the fact that such interpretation would, as we shall see, make this passage contradict what Spinoza has expressly affirmed in other passages of the "Ethics" which Loewe has tried in vain to explain away.

In regard to the expression "God thinks himself" (*seipsum intelligit*), it is to be observed that, if taken literally, it stands in express and glaring contradiction to the numerous unequivocal assertions, soon to be examined, that *intellectus* does not belong to God; for *intelligere* and *intellectus* are cognate words, and if God the Absolute literally *intelligit* he must also possess the literal *intellectus*. But in fact we have here no logical contradiction; it is only one of those verbal ones into which Spinoza has been betrayed by too frequently putting the new wine of his thought into the old bottles of traditional phraseology. The apparent contradiction disappears the moment we recognize in what sense the word "God" is employed. "In God" in the proposition quoted

does not mean in the Absolute, but somewhere in total reality. Proposition 15, Part I., cited in the demonstration to prove that God has an idea of everything, says simply, *Quidquid est, in Deo est*,—whatever is, is in God. The expression, therefore, means no more than that the ideas in question are somewhere. *Deus seipsum intelligit* is a scholastic sentence, which Spinoza fits into his own system by taking "God" in the sense of the universe. God the Absolute has no intellect, and does not think; but God the sum of reality possesses intellect, and does think, because the individual modes think. Or we can express it differently, and say that, in a certain sense, even the Absolute thinks. As substance is the ultimate cause, even though it is not the immediate cause, of everything that happens, it may be said to do everything that is done, and in this sense to think; but by this it is not meant after all that intellect and thinking pertain to anything but the consequences of substance.

Occasionally accommodation of language is carried so far that *intelligere* is applied to the Absolute properly so-called, but never without accompanying explanations that make clear in what sense the word is to be understood. The following citation from the "Theologico-Political Treatise," where he uses *Dei intellectus* for *absoluta cogitatio* as he sometimes does also in the "Ethics," for the reason that the Scholastics used the expression for the divine mind, will serve as an example:

"The will and intellect of God are in fact one and the same, nor can they be distinguished except in respect to our thoughts which we form concerning God's intellect. For example, when we direct our attention only to this

fact that the nature of a triangle is *contained in the divine nature* as an eternal verity from everlasting to everlasting, then we say God has the idea of a triangle or that he understands the nature of a triangle."[1]

From this we see quite clearly that, if Spinoza speaks of the Absolute's having an idea, or of the Absolute's understanding anything, he means only that of all psychical phenomena as well as of all material things substance is the ultimate ground, from which they may be logically deduced.

The other grounds upon which Loewe's view was based will be noticed incidentally as we proceed; and it will be seen that they were much less sure than those we have just noticed.

A passage of the "Short Treatise" which settles the question for the point of time when this work was composed is found in the seventh chapter of the First Part, where he discusses "the attributes that do not belong to God." He says:

"We shall not take much notice of the ideas which men commonly have of God, but we shall briefly examine what philosophers have to say to us about Him. These have described God to be a self-existent being, cause of all things, omniscient, omnipotent, eternal, simple, infinite, the highest good, infinitely merciful, etc."

After mentioning some general assumptions of these philosophers which are tantamount to a confession of ignorance of God, and pointing out that the "attributes" named rather describe properties which in their view belong to God than tell "what He is," he continues:

"It is now time that we consider the things which they ascribe to God, but which do not belong to Him, as that

[1] Tract. Theol.-Polit. Cap. IV, Opera II, p. 5. The italics are ours

He is omniscient, merciful, wise, etc.;[1] which things, because they are certain modes of the thought reality and in no way can exist or be conceived without the substances of which they are modes, cannot be attributed to that which is a self-existent being."[2]

Here we find that Spinoza declares in the clearest possible language that to the Absolute omniscience and wisdom may not be ascribed. How could he have said more plainly that the Absolute is not intelligent? If we were disposed to cavil, we could say perhaps that the word 'wise' implies the adaptation of means to ends, and that when Spinoza objects to our applying it to the Absolute, he only repudiates an anthropomorphic conception of divine activity, without wishing to deny divine intelligence as such. But how shall we contrive to explain away the word 'omniscient'? We cannot suppose that he meant to say that God knows some things, but does not know all things, for he is not speaking of the extent, but of modes of the divine activity and existence. He is employing the category of quality and not of quantity. If he had meant simply to limit the extent of divine knowledge, which he had no occasion to do, he would certainly have said so, not only here, but in other places. The fact is, we find before us a plain declaration that the world-ground is

[1] Cf. Trac. Theologico-Polit. (Opera II, 8). "And without doubt it is on account of human weakness that he [Paul] attributes to God, mercy, grace, wrath, etc., accommodating his words to the mind of the people, or, as he himself says (I Cor. III, 1, 2) to the mind of carnal men."

[2] In the light of this language, I am at a loss to understand Mr. Pollock's assertion (Spinoza; His Life and Philos.) that Spinoza has nowhere denied that God is conscious. Does he mean that to Spinoza's mind there remained a divine consciousness after the divine omniscience was gone? Or has he overlooked this passage?

not a knowing subject. And it is clearly the duty of sane interpretatation to explain any uncertain expressions in harmony with this unequivocal one.

The same thought is repeated in different language in Chapter 24, Part II. of the same work: "But we have already said that *no ways of thinking can be attributed to God except those which are in the creatures;* therefore it cannot be said that God loves men, much less that he should love them because they love him, or hate [them] because they hate him." That is to say, if we name the totality God, God may be said to think, love, etc., inasmuch as individual creatures think, love, etc.; but of God the Absolute these things can not be predicated. Commenting on this passage Christoph Sigwart, one of the first to study carefully the newly discovered work, admits that it "speaks decisively for pure pantheistic consistency," but adds, "only so much may be definitely asserted: If Spinoza has gone beyond naturalistic pantheism in the 'Ethics,' and has taught that God as infinite is self-conscious, this was not founded in his original way of thinking."[1]

The question arises therefore, Did Spinoza, after writing the "Short Treatise," change his mind in regard to this matter? We should naturally expect that his thoughts, in this particular as in others, would develop in the direction of further consistency; and, if the logic of pantheism had already in the "Short Treatise" eliminated a self-conscious God from his system, nothing but the clearest proof of a subsequent change of view would warrant us in supposing that it occurred. A careful examination of the passages of the "Ethics" which treat of

[1] Spinoza's Neuentdeckter Traktat, p. 94.

"God" will show that every character denied the Absolute in the earlier work is also denied him in the later one.

In the first place the Absolute, according to the "Ethics," has no will. God is, to be sure, a "free cause," indeed the only free cause;* but this does not mean that he is free in the sense of indeterminism, or even in the sense that his activity is conditioned by intelligence, but only that he is not subject to any external compulsion. All His effects result with absolute necessity from his nature, in the same way as from the nature of the triangle results eternally that its three angles are equal to two right angles."[1] All material things result with necessity from the attribute of extension, and all psychical reality with equal necessity from the attribute of thought; and the two categories of being remain causally independent of each other. Any purposeful activity is therefore inconceivable. God can not help doing everything that lies in his power.[2] "Nature has no predetermined end, and all final causes are nothing but human fictions."[3] From this it is clear at least that to attribute to Spinoza a theistic conception of the world, as has sometimes been done,[4] is absurd. *The thought attribute is no more than the passive spectator of all that exists and hap-*

* Eth. I, 17, Cor. 2.—Sequitur II, solum Deum esse causam liberam.

[1] Eth. I, 17, schol., p. 52.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Eth. I, Appendix, p. 68.—Ut jam autem ostendam, Naturam finem nullum sibi praefixum habere, et omnes causas finales nihil nisi humana esse figmenta, non opus est multis.

[4] Voigtländer in "Theologische Studien und Kritiken" (1814). Heft 3.

*pens outside itself; and in no way affects the rest of reality or is affected by it.*

Other expressions of the "Ethics" show that the attribute of thought can not even be called a spectator, except in a figurative sense; as it is devoid of conscious knowledge. This is the real purport of Eth. II. prop 9, Cor:

"*Cor.*—Whatever happens in the object of each idea, of this there is knowledge in God so far only as He has the idea of that object.

*Dem.*—Whatever happens in the object of each idea, of this there is an idea in God (by prop. 3 of this Part) *not in so far as He is infinite,* but in so far as He is considered as affected by another idea of a particular thing (by the preceding prop.); but (by prop. 7 of this Part) the order and connection of ideas is the same as the order and connection of things; therefore of that which happens in any individual object there will be knowledge in God in so far only as He has the idea of that object.—Q. E. D."[1]

This formidable language is found, when understood, to mean only that in my mind there is an 'idea' corresponding to every event in my body, and that this idea belongs to me and not to the Absolute. Proposition 3, referred to in the demonstration, says there is in God an idea of his own essence as well as of everything that results from his essence. "In God" in this connection means, as it did in a passage noticed above, only 'logically implying the Absolute,' or 'a part of total reality.' The phrase "God, not so far as he is infinite, but so far as he is considered as affected by a particular thing," is a frequently recurring expression of Spinoza's, by which he designates perishable modes, or individual things. (It will be recalled that every particular thing is caused by another particular thing, and so on *ad*

[1] The italics are ours.

*infinitum*). Spinoza's thought then is this: As there must be an idea (or soul) paired with everything that exists, there must be in God (total reality) an idea (or soul) of every particular corporeal thing (for whatever is, is "in God" in this sense); and in every such soul there is a knowledge (or corresponding psychical event) of everything that happens in the body associated with it. God in the sense of the infinite and absolute (*quatenus infinitus est*) has no such knowledge; it is only the particular piece of total reality known as the idea (or soul) of a particular body that has knowledge of what occurs in that body.[1] This passage from the "Ethics" turns out to be exactly equivalent to "Short Treatise" II, 24, above cited, which asserts that no ways of thinking can be attributed to God except those in the creatures, and which was admitted by Sigwart to be alone sufficient to decide for that point of time the question whether self-consciousness may be predicated of Spinoza's Absolute. The citation from the "Ethics" ought, therefore, to be decisive for its time.

In entire harmony with this a number of passages, both in the Ethics and in Spinoza's correspondence, declare without qualification that "intellect" does not pertain to God. We cite first one from the "Ethics."

"Prop. 31—Real intellect,[2] whether it be finite or infinite, as also will, desire, love, etc., must be referred to Natura Naturata, but not to Natura Naturans.

[1] Cf. Martineau, Study of Spinoza, pp. 216-17.

[2] Intellectus actu. Stern has not inappropriately translated the two words into German as follows: 'Der wirkliche Verstand (die wirkliche Erkenntnis).' "—Reklam's Bibliothek.

*Dem.*—For by intellect we do not of course understand *absoluta cogitatio*, but only a certain mode of thinking, which mode differs from others such as desire, love, etc., and so (by definition 5) must be conceived through *absoluta cogitatio*; that is to say, (by prop. 15 and definition 6) through some attribute of God, which expresses the eternal and infinite essence of thought, it must be so conceived that without the same it can neither be nor be conceived; and on this account (by schol. prop. 29) it must be referred to Natura Naturata, but not to Natura Naturans, as also the other modes of thought.—Q. E. D."[1]

The same language is reiterated in Epistle 9: "I think I have demonstrated clearly enough, that intellect, even though infinite, belongs to Natura Naturata and not to Natura Naturans." Natura Naturans, it will be remembered, is but another name for the Absolute. These expressions, therefore, plainly declare that no intellect can be predicated of God. It is only a variation of the same thought when he says in Cor. 2 of prop. 32: "It follows in the second place that will and intellect are related to the nature of God just as motion and rest, and absolutely as all natural things that must be determined by God to exist and act in a certain way."

Attempts have been made so to explain the word "intellect" as employed here that the Absolute would not be robbed of intelligence and omniscience after all. But as the same word occurs in similar expressions in the "Short Treatise,"[2] and as these expressions there were but one way of saying, that "omniscience" cannot be attributed to God, it ought to be sufficiently clear, in the absence of any express qualification of the sense in the "Ethics,"

[1] Eth. I, prop. 31.

[2] Korte Verhand. Deel I, Cap. 9.

that the meaning in the "Short Treatise" was the permanent one for Spinoza's thought. Those, of course, who have overlooked this fact and have not distinctly recognized the extent to which Spinoza in the affirmative expression of his thought has employed traditional language in an accommodated sense, have frequently assumed that these negative expressions which seem to contradict the others, are not to be understood in their *prima facie* meaning. They have suggested that Spinoza intended not to deprive the Absolute of understanding, but to assert only that the divine intelligence is not to be conceived "after the manner of the investigating deliberating human understanding, which does not impart reality to its conceptions, but only takes up into itself that which is already given."[1] But let it be observed that against this anthropomorphic way of thinking Spinoza had no occasion to assume a polemical attitude. Christian theology had always expressly repudiated it, making between the divine and human thinking just the distinction which Loewe would attribute to Spinoza. The distinction is an obvious implication of the doctrine of an omniscient first cause. If Spinoza had desired to deny to the Absolute nothing else than an "investigating, deliberating human understanding," he would have been repeating commonplaces. He would have had before him no opponents, and his lively consciousness of being engaged in a fight against current modes of thought would be quite unintelligible. According to Trendelenburg,[2] Spinoza must have intended to reject only the scholastic representations

[1] J. H. Loewe, op. cit., p. 301.

[2] Historische Beiträge zur Philos., p. 55.

which make the divine thinking a factor in *free* creative activity. But if this was the extent of Spinoza's purpose, the rejection of "intellect" in God was quite gratuitous, for he had already done away with the scholastic doctrine of creation when he denied the existence of divine will.[1]

In proof of his assumption, Loewe cites Eth. I, 17, schol., the meaning of which he has mistaken, as is quite obvious when the whole passage is considered. The proposition, which affirms that God's activity is determined solely by the laws of his own nature, is followed by the corollaries. The first asserts that there is no cause which, extrinsically or intrinsically, moves God to act, except the "perfection" (completeness) of his own nature; the second, that God is the only free cause, since God alone exists solely by the necessity of his own nature and acts solely by the necessity of his own nature. Then, in order to demolish the whole edifice of traditional creationism by destroying its foundations, he subjoins a lengthy scholium, most of which is devoted to showing "without the help of the foregoing proposition that neither intellect nor will belongs to the nature of God." This part reads as follows:

"Further, to say something here also concerning intellect and will, which we commonly attribute to God; if intellect and will belong to the eternal essence of God, something else certainly is to be understood by each of these attributes than what men usually understand thereby. *For the intellect and will that would constitute the*

[1] When it is said without further specification, that by the language in question Spinoza was combating anthropomorphism, we are no wiser than before. That he was doing this, no one will dispute. The only question is as to the extent of his repudiation of anthropomorphism, whether he rejected it in part or in its entirety. If in

*essence of God would have to differ from our intellect and will by as much as one pole of heaven is distant from the other, and could agree in nothing but in name; i. e., not otherwise than do the Dog-star in the sky and the barking animal.* This I will prove as follows. If intellect (knowledge) belongs to the divine nature, it cannot be by nature after the things thought (as ours is generally held to be),[1] nor simultaneous with them, since God is causally prior to all things (by cor. 1, prop. 16); but on the contrary the truth and real essence of things is what it is because it so exists as thought in the intellect of God. Wherefore the intellect of God, so far as it is conceived as constituting the essence of God, is indeed the cause of things, both of their essence and of their existence; which seems to have been perceived by those who have asserted that the intellect, will, and power of God are one and the same thing. Since therefore the intellect of God is *the sole cause of things*, and evidently (as we have shown) both of their essence and of their existence, it itself must necessarily differ from the same

its entirety, then he repudiated intelligence as an attribute of the Absolute; for an intelligent being is in that far an anthropomorphic being. To this assertion the religionist who understands himself will object just as little as will the anti-religionist. What we undertake to show is, that Spinoza rejected anthropomorphism in its entirety.

[1] "Si intellectus ad divinam naturam pertinet, non poterit, uti noster intellectus, posterior (ut plerisque placet), vel simul natura esse cum rebus intellectus." Among other mistakes, Loewe seems to have taken the phrase "ut plerisque placet" in a wrong relation and to have understood this language as meaning: "If intellect belongs to the divine nature, it cannot be by nature after (as it is generally held to be) the things thought, etc." The mere order of the words would not positively exclude this meaning, but its own absurdity would. Such a conception of divine cognition was so far from being generally held that it was not held at all. Some theologians who have been unable to reconcile creature free will with the divine foreknowledge have allowed, to be sure, that in the case of free acts God's knowledge is after the event, but even they have had no objection to the doctrine of divine foreknowledge in general.

both in essence and in existence. *For that which is caused differs from its cause precisely in that which it has from its cause.* For example, a man is the cause of the existence, but not of the essence of another man; for the latter is an eternal truth; and so they may be absolutely the same in essence, but must differ in existence; and accordingly, if the existence of one perish, that of the other will not on that account perish; but if the essence of one could be destroyed and become false, the essence of the other would be destroyed also. Consequently the thing which is the cause of the essence and of the existence of some effect, must differ from such effect both in essence and in existence. But the intellect of God is the cause both of the essence and of the existence of our intellect; *therefore the intellect of God so far as it is conceived as constituting the* DIVINE ESSENCE, *differs from our intellect both as regards essence and as regards existence, nor can be like it in anything except in name.*"[1]

Reading this passage attentively from the beginning, it is at once evident that Spinoza is basing his argument in part upon the premises of his opponents—what is not an uncommon thing. For the sake of the argument, he employs the word "intellect" for *absoluta cogitatio*, and grants even (what of course he himself did not hold, for in his system the thought attribute is not the cause of anything but thought-modes) that the divine intellect in this sense is "the sole cause of things." And from this he argues that the absolute thought, which is (in his view also) the ultimate cause of our intellect, can only improperly be called intellect, it being in fact nothing of the kind. Loewe makes the strange mistake of understanding the theistic expressions here found as indicating Spinoza's own views.

[1] We have italicized the expressions to which special attention is invited.

That by this language Spinoza desired to exclude from the Absolute not the cognitive consciousness as such, but only an intelligence conceived "after the manner of the investigating, deliberating human understanding" that does not create its own objects but simply recognizes those that are given, is seen to be even absurd, when we note that Spinoza starts from this assumption as one of his premises. "If intellect belongs to the divine nature," says he, "it (its knowledge) can not be by nature after the things thought (as our own is generally held to be), or simultaneous with them, since God is causally prior to all things, (pro Cor. 1, prop. 16)."[1] In laying this premise Spinoza expresses a view that no one disputed, and the reference to a preceding corollary is only to show its relation to his own thought also. Now it would be strange indeed if the conclusion he draws did not go beyond the explicit declaration of one of his premises![2]

The second premise in Spinoza's argument, namely, "The thing caused differs from its cause precisely in that which it receives from its cause," and therefore that "a thing which is the cause both of the essence and of the existence of any effect, must differ from such effect both as regards essence and as regards existence," we have briefly noticed in another connection. It ought now to be more fully explained, in order to make clear its significance for the

[1] An incidental, but convincing, proof that *intellectus* must be taken in its *prima facie* meaning as cognitive consciousness, lies in the circumstance that here we have to translate the word by 'knowledge,' in order to make sense.

[2] Loewe's treatment of this scholium can be accounted for only by his mistaking the meaning of *ut plerisque placet*, to which we have referred in a previous note.

specific question under consideration. The assertion looks like an express contradiction of Spinoza's fundamental and constant assumption that "that which has nothing in common with another thing cannot be the cause of its existence;"[1] that "those things which have nothing in common can not be the cause one of another;"[2] that "of things which have nothing in common, one can not be the cause of the other."[3] It has therefore been regarded as quite unintelligible, an enigma. Hence expounders of Spinoza have generally ignored it altogether, and have proceeded to interpret his system as if this passage had never been written. But it can not be ignored with impunity. For it is not a mere accidental remark, nor a disingenuous assumption made only for a moment, in order to confound an opponent; it constitutes a constant factor in his thinking, and is carefully re-affirmed in another place.[4] It is so far from being unimportant that, so long as it remains unintelligible, one is liable to misunderstand Spinoza's conception of *absoluta cogitatio.*

In order to get at the meaning of this language, we must recur to Spinoza's definition of essence. He defines it as "that without which the thing can neither be nor be conceived, and *vice versa* that which without the thing can neither be nor be conceived;[5] i. e., as consisting of the peculiarities which

[1] Korte Verhand, Aanhangsel, ax. 5.

[2] Eth. I, prop. 3.

[3] Epist 4, p. 202.

[4] Epis. 64 (olim 66).

[5] Eth. II, Def. 2.—Ad essentiam alicujus rei id pertinere dico, quo dato res necessario ponitur, et quo sublato res necessario tollitur; *vel id, sine quo res et vice versa quod sine re, nec esse nec concipi potest.*

constitute the thing's separate being. For example: *extensio* is the cause of particular bodies, but, according to the definition of essence, it constitutes the essence of none. If the essence of a body were *extensio*, essence would have to be defined merely as that without which a thing cannot be conceived, and not also as that which cannot be conceived without the thing; for, as a matter of fact, *extensio* can be conceived without positing this or that body. The essence of a given body then consists, as we saw, in that *peculiar modification of extensio* which constitutes it as a distinct thing. It is conceived as the thing's modality, as it were, which would be expressed in an ideal definition. We can understand, accordingly, Spinoza's assertion that a thing (the essential thing) must differ from its cause precisely in that which it receives from the cause, i. e., in its peculiar nature. The expression 'differs in existence' means, of course, 'has a separate existence.' He is able, therefore, to declare that what is the cause both of the essence and of the existence of a thing differs from it in both respects, and at the same time allow some community between cause and effect, though this, in the case of substance and ultimate modes, is so attenuated that it is described as only a community of name. In addition to its 'essence' (which is conceived so as hardly to be distinguishable from what in logic we call the specific difference) and 'existence,' a generic quality representing the cause belongs to each thing. Intellect and *absoluta cogitatio*, therefore, though different in essence and separate in existence, have something, a certain qualitative character, in common; they both fall in the same general category of *cogitatio*. They

are opposite poles of the psychical; just as animal bodies and absolute extension are opposite poles under the attribute of extension. Conscious thinking is at the extreme of determinateness, *absoluta cogitatio* is at the extreme of indeterminateness—the *ens absolute indeterminatum*. And so, in spite of their common substance, it is scarcely an hyperbole to say that they are as unlike as the Dog-star in the sky and the barking animal, which resemble each other only in name.—The principle, *Causatum differt a sua causa praecise in eo, quod a causa habet*, is quite in harmony with the general method of Spinoza's system, and only verbally conflicts with the more frequently repeated maxim that cause and effect must have something in common.

If anyone still doubts that by excluding 'intellect' from the Absolute, Spinoza meant to exclude conscious intelligence, let him consider just what *intellectus* means in Spinoza's vocabulary. It is the term employed to denote not merely the ordinary mental processes, but particularly true knowledge as distinguished from the unreliable and the untrue, the knowledge that is often conceived as out of time relations. It is the word applied to the *scientia intuitiva*, the knowledge that is above process. Even this kind of knowledge, or rather this kind of knowledge especially, is by Spinoza's language excluded from the Absolute. If he had wished to ascribe to the Absolute conscious knowledge of any kind, he could not have found in his vocabulary a more suitable word than *intellectus*, *intellectus* in the sense of pure intuition that contemplates the divine essence and all the divine activities and products in the eternal, changeless light of truth. But this conception was expressly

rejected by Spinoza as often as he said, "Intellect does not belong to God." And in order not to be misunderstood, he circumstantially explains in one passage that it is the cognitive consciousness as such that has no place in the Absolute: "But because I desire to avoid all confusion, I will speak only of the thing that is perceived by us in the clearest manner, i. e., of cognition (*intellectio*), than which nothing is more clearly perceived by us. For we can cognize (*intelligere*) nothing which does not lead to a more perfect knowledge of cognition."[1] That the term *intellectio* is here correctly translated into English by 'cognition,' will not, I think, be questioned. That it stands for the cognitive consciousness as such, appears from Spinoza's description of it as that which is present in every act of knowledge; and further from the obvious fact that it is in reality the *only* element that is present in every act of knowledge. A consciousness of process does not accompany all cognitive states—least of all for Spinoza. He can refer, therefore, only to the cognitive consciousness as such.

The weakness of the position (even before the discovery of the "Short Treatise," containing variations of language which more clearly explain expressions in the "Ethics"), that by excluding "intellect" from "God" Spinoza meant to exclude only the anthropomorphic conception quoted above, will appear still more plainly, if we will ask ourselves: What language could Spinoza have employed, in order to express himself clearly, granting that he had desired to affirm a psychical principle as an attribute of the Absolute, and at the same time to negative conscious

[1] Eth. I, 31, schol.

intelligence? He could not have negatived *cogitatio*, for in that case he would have had no word left with which to affirm the original psychical principle. The word *cognitio* would have served him no better than *intellectio;* for anyone who were disposed to limit *cognitio* so as to make it apply to the human processes of knowledge only, could do so just as plausibly as one has limited the meaning of *intellectio* and of *intellectus*. We should still have been told that Spinoza intended to repudiate as an attribute of the Absolute only a crude anthropomorphic conception of cognition and not cognition as such. What language, then, could he have employed? It must be recognized that, in fact, he could have found in his whole vocabulary no more appropriate words with which to exclude conscious intelligence from the Absolute, than *Ad Dei naturam neque intellectum neque voluntatem pertinere.* When he expressed himself affirmatively, he was constrained, partly by the limitations of language and partly by the desire to give his system some flavor of piety, to use traditional terms such as *cogitare*, *intelligere*, etc.; and this circumstance explains why his meaning has been so persistently misunderstood, notwithstanding that both the language in which he negatively defines his thought, and the conceptions in connection with which such terms are used, warn us that we may not take them in their traditional sense.

The same meaning that is contained in the words, "Intellect does not belong to God," is expressed in another form, when Spinoza says that God does not have ideas, or that he is not to be conceived *sub ideis*. In a letter to Spinoza written when the "Ethics" was well under way, Simon de Vries refers

to an oral explanation previously given by Spinoza of the distinction between thought considered as *constans ideis* and as *sub cogitatione*, and says that the matter still remains unclear to his mind.[1] He does not see that, if ideas were removed from thought, there would be anything left. If ideas vanish, all *cogitatio* must vanish with them. Spinoza replies that his pupil has identified *cogitatio* as such with ideas because he has had in his eye only his own human *cogitatio*. Human consciousness, being a mode, of course consists of ideas, and so when he had abstracted from all ideas in his own thought, he naturally found nothing left of that particular *cogitatio* which he had in mind. With this explanation and a reference to the already demonstrated proposition that in any case *intellectus* belongs to Natura Naturata, he treats the difficulty as solved.[2] His thought, which he found difficult to express, seems to have been this: *Absoluta cogitatio* is not to be conceived after the manner of anything immediately known to us in consciousness, but is something more fundamental to which we may conclude from the contents of consciousness; it is a psychical something which must be postulated as the back-ground and ultimate cause of everything psychical, but cannot be more closely determined. In any case, it is suf-

[1] Epis. 8, (olim 26), p. 221.

[2] Epis. 9, (olim 27), p. 224.—Quod autem dicitis, vos non concipere cogitationem nisi sub ideis, quia remotis ideis cogitationem destruitis, credo id vobis contingere propterea, quod dum vos, *res scilicet cogitantes*, id facitis, omnes vestras cogitationes et conceptus seponitis. Quare non mirum est, quod, ubi omnes vestras cogitationes seposuistis, nihil postea vobis cogitandum maneat. Quod autem ad rem attinet, puto me satis clare et evidenter demonstrasse, intellectum, quamvis infinitum, ad Naturam Naturatam, non vere ad naturantem pertinere.—

ficiently clear that, according to Spinoza, ideas may not be predicated of the Absolute. This is equivalent on the one hand to the assertion that intellect can not be predicated of God, and on the other to Spinoza's definition of God as *ens absolute indeterminatum*. In indeterminate thought there can be no definite, specific thoughts, and therefore no 'ideas,' no knowledge.[1]

[1] After this somewhat protracted discussion of *absoluta cogitatio* and related conceptions, it is scarcely necessary to add anything here concerning the conception *idea ideae* to what we have remarked elsewhere (pp. 192-4). We saw how Spinoza uses this conception to explain self-consciousness in man, and that it seemed to imply that consciousness is a necessary character of "idea." Those who, on account of Spinoza's doctrine of human self-consciousness, have scrupled to ascribe no conscious intelligence to his Absolute, have hestitated only because: (1) they have mistaken the meaning of passages in which 'God' is used not in the sense of the Absolute, but in the sense of total reality; and because (2) they have not taken into account the multiple application of the word 'idea,' which would forbid our basing any conclusions on the fact that the word is sometimes applied to God—unless the meaning in these cases were clearly determined by the context; and because (3) they have entirely overlooked Spinoza's assertion that God may not be conceived *sub ideis*. Granting even, what can not be made out, that Spinoza conceived of thought as necessarily self-conscious, we should still be as far as ever from a self-conscious Absolute; for the absolutely indeterminate thought that would characterize the *ens absolute indeterminatum* could be nothing but the limit of consciousness. Real consciousness would vanish in its indefiniteness.

## CHAPTER VII.

## HOW SPINOZA'S CONCEPTION OF THE ABSOLUTE IS RELATED TO THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS.[1]

### 1. *Analysis of the Religious Consciousness.*

Whether or not religion has any rational grounds, and whether or not there are, in any case, other forms of human life which may well be substituted for it, are questions that do not concern us here. Our purpose is simply to show what we conceive religion to be, and then to determine whether it is compatible with Spinoza's conception of "God." We mean, of course, religion regarded as an experience of the individual, and, in this aspect, not as it appears within the limits of Christianity merely, but as a universal phenomenon.

On account of the variety of religious phenomena brought to our knowledge by the investigations of recent years, and on account of the apparent confusion of tongues in this field of discussion, some seem to question the propriety of attempting as yet a universally valid definition. It is thought that the only thing practicable is for each individual to define what he himself means by the term, without presuming to ask universal assent to his particular conception.[2] This we will not admit. The universal char-

[1] A part of this chapter appeared as an article in "The Reformed Church Review," Jan., 1904.

[2] William James, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," pp. 26-31.

acters of religion are as definite as those of most other objects of knowledge, and can be specifically enumerated and described. A definition of religion, therefore, presents no peculiar difficulties. If what we seek is a formula that will express the deepest mysteries both of human nature and of the Godhead, —what seems to be demanded and attempted by some writers—then, of course, definition is not only difficult, but impossible. Or, if we require that a definition shall accurately express the significance of the religious interest for man's normal life, we shall not find it an easy task to formulate one that will escape plausible criticism. Ours is a less ambitious aim. It is simply to state those general characters of religion which distinguish it from other phenomena. Nothing more can reasonably be required. A definition as such must be regarded as adequate when it serves the practical purpose of separating for our thought the object defined from all other objects. When we say religion has as definite characters as most objects of our knowledge, we mean religion as the term is employed by intelligent, but unsophisticated, persons when they aim to speak with logical accuracy. In discussion no one has the right to use the term in any other sense. Loose usage for rhetorical purposes, as frequently illustrated in practical life and in literature, is to be entirely ignored. Moreover, the current meaning, when defined, is not to be expressed, or rather compressed, in the terms of some particular system of philosophy, but to be stated in language of universal significance.

If writers on religion do not entirely agree in regard to the meaning of the term; this fact is due, not

so much to the difficulty of the conception, as to different philosophical presuppositions; to the weakness of some writers for high-sounding, but vague, terminology; and to the attempts of others to pass something else than religion under the name of religion.

What men have always and everywhere concurred in calling religion has three aspects, answering to the threefold life of man: (1) a doctrinal aspect, in which it appears as a body of beliefs, and is related to man's intellectual life; (2) an emotional aspect, in which it may be described in terms of feeling; and (3) a practical aspect, in which it presents itself as an expression of man's volitional life. An adequate definition must take into account all three of these aspects. The diversity among traditional and current definitions is in great part due to the fact that most of them seize some one aspect of religion, while few recognize all three aspects at once. For some writers religion is a "belief," a belief in God, in gods, in spirits, or in something else; for others it is a "sentiment," variously described as "veneration," a "feeling of dependence," etc.; for still others it is "practices" of some kind, such as rites and ceremonies, morality, or something else that implies a relation to man's active powers only. Defining it in its completeness, we would say: *Religion is the emotions and activities determined by belief in a higher personal power, or in higher personal powers, with whom man is assumed to sustain relations.* In this statement all three of the elements of religion are given due recognition. Moreover, it will be found sufficiently comprehensive to include fetichism and Christianity, demonolatry and the worship of the Heavenly Father, polytheism and monotheism;

and at the same time sufficiently limited by the words "higher" and "personal" to exclude merely human relationships on the one hand and atheistic phenomena on the other.

In the concrete religious phenomena of the world the three elements are of course variously emphasized. Even in the same cult the peculiar constitution of different individuals will occasion that in some cases the doctrinal element appear the most prominent, in other cases the emotional element, and in others the volitional element; but in no case will any one element exist entirely alone. Religious beliefs wholly apart from religious emotions and activities, religious emotions wholly apart from religious beliefs and activities, and religious activities wholly apart from religious emotions and beliefs, are mere abstractions that have no existence in the concrete world of fact. Religious emotions in particular are frequently spoken of as though they could exist out of all relation to beliefs. As a matter of fact, however, religious emotions are only ordinary emotions (love, joy, fear, admiration, etc.) as conditioned by a religious object. Hence religious emotions without religious beliefs, or assumptions, cannot exist. Of religious practices the same is true. Practices of any sort which have no ground in beliefs or assumptions are insane. The only question that can arise, therefore, is as to what beliefs are essential to religion, i. e., what beliefs are the necessary condition of religious emotions and practices; and it is to this question in particular that we must invite attention.

In the definition proposed we have assumed that the beliefs which condition religious emotions and practices must include a belief in a higher personal

power, or in higher personal powers, assumed to sustain relations with men. The word "personal" is important, and expresses the truth which we desire especially to emphasize. It is a point which, in philosophical discussions of religion, is often either left in vague uncertainty, or at most only implied. But as "personal," when applied to the ultimate reality, is a word which some profess not to understand, we will explain, without attempting here an accurate definition of a term so often employed in a vague sense, that by personality we do not mean, of course, spatial form and "local habitation," but only the sum of those qualities which constitute a free intelligence, or, to describe it in the lowest possible terms, the cognitive and volitional consciousness. The word "self-consciousness," as ordinarily used, expresses our meaning with sufficient precision. This much at least, we contend, is required of its object by religion. The typical religious consciousness requires much more, such as various interests, sensibilities, moral qualities, etc. If it be said that this is gross anthropomorphism, that the "higher power" of religion is according to us only a human being with some of his limitations removed, we can only reply that, whether anthropomorphism or not, it is what has always and everywhere been essential to religion. It is not necessary, of course, that the object worshiped be expressly defined as "personal," or that any personal attributes be expressly mentioned; it is not necessary even that the name "God" appear, for the thing may be present in the absence of the name. It is quite sufficient that such attributes be assumed, and the evidence that they are assumed may conceivably be only the behavior of the votaries. But

no forms of human experience can with propriety be called religion, unless they ascribe, explicitly or implicitly, personal qualities to a higher power or to higher powers.

The fact that the recognition of personality is sometimes only implicit, has occasioned some very extraordinary and contradictory assertions concerning both particular religions and religion in general. A typical example of these occurs in Daniel G. Brinton's "Religions of Primitive Peoples." In one place he affirms that "There is no one belief or set of beliefs which constitutes religion. We are apt to suppose that every creed must teach a belief in a God or gods, in an immortal soul, and in a divine government of the world. The Parliament of Religions, which lately met at Chicago, announced, in its preliminary call, these elements as essential to the idea of religion. No mistake could be greater."[1] From this it would seem that there can be religion without a God, or gods, or anything of the kind. But elsewhere in the same volume it is said, quite inconsistently with this, that "It makes no difference whether we analyze the superstitions of the rudest savages, or the lofty utterances of John the Evangelist, or of Spinoza the 'god-intoxicated philosopher' we shall find one and the same postulate to the faith of all."[2] "This universal postulate, the psychic origin of all religious thought, is the recognition, or, if you please, the assumption, *that conscious volition is the ultimate source of all Force.* It is the

[1] Religions of Primitive Peoples (American Lectures on the History of Religions) p. 28.

[2] How erroneous is the assumption that Spinoza regards "conscious volition" as the ultimate source of all force, the reader of the foregoing pages need not be told.

belief that behind the sensuous, phenomenal world, distinct from it, giving it form, existence, and activity, lies the ultimate, invisible, immeasurable power of Mind, of conscious Will, or Intelligence, analogous in some way to our own; and—mark this essential corollary—*that man is in communication with it.*" With the exception of the reference to Spinoza, we would not dissent from this statement; but we are unable to reconcile it with the one first quoted. For the assumption of "conscious volition," of "mind," of "intelligence," as "the ultimate source of all force" is only another way of saying "a belief in God or gods" and "in a divine government of the world."

Buddhism is often referred to as an "atheistic" religion; but, if we are consistent, we must regard the expression as a contradicton in terms. By such language we confound things that are not only essentially different, but quite opposite in character. As a matter of fact, wherever we find temples, ceremonies, prayers, or worship of any kind, we have the implicit assumption of a higher power or of higher powers to which personal attributes are ascribed. Purely ethical, humanitarian, or political societies may take on some of the aspects of religious organizations, but if they involve the recognition of no higher personal power, they cannot properly be called religious. To class them as such is to put together things that are essentially different, and to use misleading language. If any organization of this kind is commonly known as "religious," it is because it is commonly supposed to imply in its forms and activities a reference to some higher power or powers with personal attributes. It may even occur that an ethico-philosophical system which is atheistic

at the beginning develops later into a religion; or that the same system is atheism for the philosophically initiated and is theism or polytheism for the multitude. In Buddhism we seem to have an illustration of both of these cases. The circumstance that the Buddhism of the people is religion, despite the fact that the Buddhism of Gautama and of philosophers now in different varieties of the cult is said to be atheism, accounts for the frequent paradoxical reference to the system as an "atheistic religion." Such language is sometimes convenient for purposes of characterization, and possesses a certain rhetorical value, but should never be taken for exact scientific statement. The fact is that Buddhism is an anomaly, the name covering two things that logically exclude each other—atheism and religion; and, if we are to use exact language, we ought to separate it into these two elements and call each by its right name. For convenience we may, if we choose, loosely call the aggregate of phenomena known as Buddhism either atheism or religion, or even "atheistic religion"; but in this case we should distinctly recognize that we are not speaking with logical precision. The anomalous and inconsistent character of Buddhism does not warrant us in extending the term religion so as to obliterate the distinction between religion and atheism.

What has been said may seem to class among those who are in no sense religious the pious agnostics of our day, i. e., those who have no definite conceptions in regard to the supersensible world, and yet, by conforming to the requirements of religious organizations and even by relishing some kinds of religious exercises, appear to possess a genuine re-

ligious interest. In such persons we have, in fact, something like a case of double personality; and they are to be classed as religious and non-religious by turns. When they put on the scientific frame of mind and distinctly recognize the invalidity (for them) of all theological and mythological forms of thought, they are non-religious (atheists, if you will); but when they surrender themselves to a system of religious conceptions as if these were true, and are emotionally and volitionally affected thereby, they are religious. Few men, perhaps none, are absolutely consistent in any respect, and it should not seem strange if many are inconsistent in the matter of religion. It is even possible for a constantly and devoutly religious man to hold a theoretical system of implicit atheism (implicit, I say, but not explicit); and indeed the history of thought exhibits not a few such cases. In fact, systems of Christian theology have sometimes contained elements of undeveloped atheism. But on this account to identify religion and atheism would be absurd.

In the world of fact there is no broad line of separation between religious experiences and non-religious experiences, or between religious systems and non-religious systems; religion shades off by imperceptible degrees into non-religion. On this account a given system, because of either its indefinite or its mixed character, may be difficult to classify. The same is true of some objects in every department of knowledge. In the world of natural things, classes shade off gradually into one another, and many individuals do not possess very definite marks of any class; and many others possess some marks of two classes. Naturalists meet some specimens of life in re-

gard to which it is difficult to say whether they are plants or animals; and others clearly belonging to the animal kingdom in regard to which it can hardly be said that they are vertebrates, or that they are non-vertebrates. Nevertheless "animal life," "plant life," "vertebrate," etc., are very definite conceptions; and the difficulty of classifying some concrete phenomena does not render them either less definite or less valid. Neither does the difficulty of classifying some human experiences and systems with reference to religion affect in any way the definte logical content of the concept "religion." Nor does it prevent us from easily classifying almost all experiences and systems.

The distinctive character of religion appears more clearly when we observe wherein it differs from morality on the one hand and from metaphysics on the other. Morality is simply conformity to the recognized standards of conduct, and does not necessarily imply a reference to anything beoynd the individual's immediate relations. It is not necessarily religious. In fact many moral men are irreligious and some systems of morality are atheistic. In Christianity we have a religion that includes an ideal morality, but the purely ethical content even of Christianity, if taken alone, does not constitute religion. Morality becomes religion only when norms of life are recognized not merely as human ideals, but as expressions of a divine will. Accordingly Kant has defined religion, i. e., rational religion, as "the recognition of all our duties as divine commands."[1] This

[1] "Die Religion innerhalt d. Grenzen d. blossen Vernunft," Viertes Stück, Erster Theil: "Religion ist (subjectiv betrachtet) das Erkenntniss aller unserer Pflichten als göttlicher Gebote."

would no doubt be accepted by many as a sufficiently accurate definition of essential Christianity. The important truth expressed is that duties alone are not sufficient to constitute religion. In order to become religion, duties must be regarded as sanctioned by a divine person.

The circumstance that monotheistic religion (on its intellectual side) and metaphysics have to do with the same object, namely the ultimate reality, often occasions an oversight of the specific difference between religion and metaphysics. Every kind of monism assumes a unitary world-ground, and often calls the ultimate reality "God"; but every kind of monism is not therefore monotheism, or in some sense a religious conception of the world. Whether it is or not, depends on the attributes with which the world-ground is clothed. If monism ascribes personal qualities of any sort to its absolute, it becomes monotheism, a religion; otherwise not. It may describe the ultimate reality as "infinite," "absolute," "immutable," "eternal," etc.; but none of these predicates constitutes the ultimate reality a religious object. "Infinite" mechanism, for example, would not be able to excite "reverence," "veneration," "respect," "love," or any other emotions characteristically religious. Certainly nothing better could be said of "immutable" coëxistence and sequence, or of "eternal" dirt. At most such things could excite mere wonder. Some elements of ideality, at least, must be present in an object that conditions "reverence," "love," and similar emotions; and ideality implies in that far personality. Modern Transcendental Idealism, as represented by Emerson, may be regarded, therefore, as still within, though

barely within, the pale of religion; for, although its God tends theoretically to "evaporate" into an abstraction, practically the evaporation never becomes quite complete. In different degrees the Emersonians *personify* the world. As to the "feeling of dependence," which has sometimes been regarded as the very soul of religion, let it be observed that not every feeling of dependence is meant, but the feeling of dependence on the "Infinite," and, by tacit assumption, on the "Infinite" conceived as clothed in personal attributes. Dependence on infinite force, on infinite gravitation for example, is not what is meant, and would still not be, if in addition to "infinite" we bestowed other imposing titles such as "absolute," "immutable," and "eternal." Neither have distinctively religious practices ever been determined by metaphysical attributes alone. Men have never been quite stupid enough to perform religious rites before impersonal mechanism, even if conceived as immeasurably big, or to offer sacrifices and prayers to a system of mathematical relations, though regarded as "eternal." Such acts, when closely examined, are found to be always attended by a recognition of the personality of the religious object. Toward objects like those just mentioned men have never even assumed the corresponding mental attitudes which, in the more refined religious exercises, sometimes take the place of outward acts of worship. Mere infinity, mere eternity, mere absoluteness, and mere causality, have no value whatever for the religious consciousness. Professor James is entirely right when, of a God constituted of metaphysical attributes alone, he says: "From the point of view of practical religion, the metaphysical

monster which they offer to our worship is an absolutely worthless invention of the scholarly mind."[1]

Mere ontology is not theology, and the adjustment of oneself to an assumed ultimate reality is not necessarily religion. Whether it is or not, depends on the *kind* of ultimate reality assumed. The fundamental weakness in Edward Caird's treatment of religion, as of most writers whose conception of religion is intellectualistic, consists in his tendency to confound religion and metaphysics. He says, for example, "The religious like the scientific consciousness seeks to find the reason or principle of the particular in the universal; and it differs from science mainly in this, that it cannot rest except in the infinite unity which underlies all the differences of the finite."[2] This recognizes both a certain agreement and a certain difference between the religious interest and the scientific. The difference noticed is in fact that which obtains not between the scientific and religious interests, but between the scientific interest (as manifested in the particular sciences) and the philosophic (metaphysical) interest, which cannot rest except in a unitary conception of the world; and the difference is only one of degree, the scientific interest culminating in the philosophical. It is therefore only the scientific interest in its highest development that Caird here calls the religious con-

[1] "The Varieties of Religious Experience," p. 447.—Cf. H. Sidgwick. "Philosophy: Its Scope and Relations," p. 39; also Feuerbach's quite true assertion; "Dieses [metaphysische] Wesen hat für die Religion nicht mehr Bedeutung, als für eine besondere Wissenschaft ein allgemeiner Grundsatz von welchem sie anhebt."

[2] "Evolution of Religion," Vol. I, p. 112.

sciousness. The truth is that religion seeks primarily not "reason and principle," "unity," "the universal," etc. as such, but help, protection, security, peace, fellowship, and other practical goods. "Infinite unity" as such is of absolutely no significance for the distinctively religious consciousness. It is not surprising that elsewhere the same author, though taking some account of the practical aspect of religion, defines it in a way to remove all grounds for the distinction between irreligion and religion. "A man's religion," he says, "is the expression of his ultimate attitude to the Universe, the summed-up meaning and purport of his whole consciousness of things."[1] If, as this language implies, any kind of ultimate attitude is religion, then irreligion and aggressive atheism are particular varieties of religion. The point of view is intelligible, of course; but it is evident that, if we adopted Caird's conception, we should be compelled to invent a new term with which to distinguish religion from irreligion. The confusion results from the failure to attribute to religion a *peculiar* object,—an object that differs from a merely metaphysical one in that it possesses personal qualities.

Even some thinkers of strong religious interest, it must be admitted, have hesitated, on account of particular philosophical presuppositions, to accept *theoretically* the personality of the absolute; but they have in that far been inconsistent. Schleiermacher, for example, who in his earlier works hardly employs the word "God," using instead impersonal

[1] "Evolution of Religion," Vol. I., p. 30. It is only fair to say that this is not meant to be his final statement of the matter. It is sufficient, however, to characterize his standpoint.

expressions such as "the infinite," "the universe," "the whole," etc., is constrained later not only to adopt fully the word "God," and to make a distinction between God and the universe, but to clothe "the infinite," *for practical religion*, in the attributes of the definite personal God of traditional theology.[1] It could not be otherwise. It was impossible for him, as it has been for all other thinkers, to constitute actual, concrete religion without a God of personal attributes.

It is to be regretted that Prof. James, in his recent work on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," fails to recognize explicitly the truth that religion requires a personal object. As a consequence of this failure, he seems to have fallen into certain inconsistencies. He defines religion, considered subjectively, as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they may consider divine."[2] But in his remarks on what is to be understood by "divine," he says there are religions which do not positively assume a God, and cites Buddhism as an example. He seems to think that the divineness of the universe for the religious consciousness may conceivably be "a mere quality like the eye's brilliancy or the skin's softness" and not "a self-conscious life."[3] That such a view is based on an imperfect analysis of the religious consciousness, we have tried to show above. We would here point out only that, in other parts of

[1] Compare the "Reden über die Religion" and "Der christliche Glaube."

[2] P. 31.

[3] P. 33.

his work, Professor James employs expressions which can not be reconciled with the breadth of his definition. Toward the end of his volume he says, for example, "Prayer in this wide sense," "as meaning every kind of inward communion or conversation with the power recognized as divine," "is the very soul and essence of religion."[1] By prayer, as he further explains, he understands "no vain exercise of words, no mere repetition of certain sacred formulae, but the very movement itself of the soul, putting itself in a personal relation of contact with the mysterious power of which it feels the presence." Concerning this language it is to be observed that when the expressions "communion," "conversation," "personal relation," etc., are employed, the personality of the religious object is tacitly assumed. Now if prayer requires a personal object, and if prayer "is the very soul and essence of religion," we ought to conclude that religion requires a personal object. In fact, the word "power," as employed here, has quite a different value from the unequivocally impersonal "force," and seems to imply intelligence and will.

The foregoing discussion is calculated perhaps to create the impression that there prevails great diversity of opinion as to the nature of religion. A survey of the definitions of other philosophers and scholars than those cited would at first deepen this impression. A careful analysis, however, would show that opinions, though by no means exhibiting unanimity, are not so various as the language employed in different definitions seems to indicate. Many of the so-called definitions were never intended

[1] P. 464.

to be scientific statements. Such, for example, is Matthew Arnold's characterization of religion as "morality touched with emotion." Others state merely what a writer accepts in place of religion, and are not seriously meant to describe "religion" at all; as Renan's profession of faith: "My religion is now as ever the progress of reason, in other words the progress of science." Still others are attempts to define religion, or some aspect of it, in terms of a particular system of philosophy, and do not necessarily imply a repudiation of all other formulated statements. In this sense we are to take Hegel's language, when he says that religion is "The knowledge possessed by the finite mind of its nature as absolute mind." It would evidently be a mistake to suppose that every variation in the phraseology employed when speaking of religion represents a fundamental difference of conception.

Since historical, comparative, and psychological studies in religion were begun in a scientific spirit, there has been in fact very notable progress toward substantial agreement as to what it is that we are to call religion. In his book on "The Study of Religion," Professor Jastrow has taken pains to trace carefully the historical development of thought on this subject, and finds that, while there is no unanimity as to the origin of religion, there is now general agreement on the following points: (1) There is a connection of some kind between religion and life; (2) One element of religion is the feeling of dependence upon a Power or Powers beyond man's control; (3) The votaries of religion attempt to establish proper relations between themselves and the higher Power or Powers; and (4) Religion mani-

fests a tendency toward organization. It will be observed that the word "Powers" is here employed, and that, as we remarked above, it ought to imply personal qualities. If "Powers," when used in connection with this subject, does not mean *personal* Powers, it does not mean anything.

Kant's words are as true now as they were when first written: "The conception 'God' is generally understood to mean, not merely a blindly-operating eternal nature, as the root of things, but a supreme being that is regarded as the originator of things by virtue of intelligence and freedom; *and moreover this conception is the only one that can interest us*"[1] No one will suspect the late Mr. Sidgwick of viewing this matter from any other than a purely rational standpoint. We may be permitted to quote his well chosen words: "God as the object of religious thought and worship,"—he is evidently thinking of highly developed monotheistic religions, and of Christianity in particular as the final products of the religious consciousness,—"is thought of as having a Righteous will, the content of which, so far as it relates to man, is partially apprehended by man under the form of rules of duty; He is thought of as standing to human beings in a relation fitly symbolized by the relation of a father to his children; He is thought of as source of aid and strength in the never-ending struggle with sin, which

[1] Kritik d. r. V., Elementarlehre, 7, Abschnitt.—"Da man unter dem Begriffe von Gott nicht etwa bloss eine blindwirkende ewige Natur, als die Wurzel der Dinge, sondern ein höchstes Wesen, das durch Verstand und Freiheit der Urheber der Dinge sein soll, zu verstehen gewohnt ist, und auch dieser Begriff allein uns interessirt, so könnte man, nach der Strenge, dem Deisten allen Glauben an Gott absprechen . . ."

forms an essential element of the higher moral life; finally He is thought of as centre and sovereign of a spiritual kingdom of which human beings are or may be members."[1] Indeed it must be admitted, whether we accept his general philosophical standpoint or not, that Romanes expresses no more than the truth, when he says: "To speak of the Religion of the Unknowable, the Religion of Cosmism, the Religion of Humanity, and so forth, where the personality of the First Cause is not recognized, is as unmeaning as it would be to speak of the love of a triangle, or the rationality of the equator."[2]

### 2. *The Religious Consciousness and Spinoza's Conception of God.*

If religion necessarily postulates (explicitly or implicitly) a personal object, Spinoza's system is not difficult to classify. Our investigations have shown that his "God" is in no sense a personal being. The metaphysical attributes of his absolute are the same, to be sure, as those ascribed by traditional theology to the God of religion. It is self-existent, eternal, infinite, unchangeable, the first cause. But these characters can be predicated with perfect propriety of the ultimate reality as conceived in avowedly anti-religious systems, even of the "matter" of old-time materialism. In addition to the attributes just named, Spinoza mentions, it is true, one other, which sounds quite religious; he says his substance possesses "perfection." But by this term, as we have found, he means only infinitude. These purely metaphysical attributes, singly or collectively,

[1] "Philosophy: Its Scope and Relations," p. 39.
[2] Thoughts on Religion, p. 41.

have in themselves no significance whatever for the religious consciousness. In order to constitute a religious object, they would have to be associated with personal qualities. But all such Spinoza expressly repudiates when he deprives the Absolute of purpose, volition, and knowledge. There is no escape from calling his system atheism. The name will be thought a compliment by some, a reproach by others. We employ the term with no desire to imply either praise or blame, but only for the sake of clearness. Whether Spinoza's atheism is practically inferior or superior to religion, and whether it is theoretically less true or more true, are questions which we are not called upon to decide; but that it is not religion, is sufficiently clear. So far from being the religious philosopher *par excellence*, which he is often supposed to be, he represents the diametrically opposite spirit and world-view.

It should not be overlooked that his conception of the world is not even compatible with that modern pseudo-religion called "the worship of Nature." The doctrine of evolution, so dominant in the thought of the present generation, which views the world in all its aspects as in process of development toward higher forms and better conditions, contains two elements that are agreeable to the healthy religious consciousness. One element is its teleology and the other its optimism,—both implying a certain kind and degree of personification. Evolutionism, when looked at in this way, is well calculated to kindle in some minds a devotion to nature which becomes a sort of substitute for religion. But Spinoza's system contains neither teleology nor optimism. The universe is not regarded as moving to-

ward any goal, much less toward a higher and better one. For him it is simply actual. Not only are the predicates "high" and "low," "good" and "bad," inapplicable to his cosmos, but the idea of development is foreign to his thought. He is not an evolutionist; he is not an optimist; he is not a pessimist; he is an actualist. It is proper to observe at this place that, although frequently charged with being an atheist, Spinoza never really denied the charge. He was embarrassed, provoked, and alarmed by it, to be sure; for,—be it said to the reproach of the age in which he lived,—he was fully aware of the trouble which a reputation for atheism would bring upon him. Accordingly, he earnestly protested against the name; but, as his language clearly indicates, it was to the opprobrious implications of the word as then used, to its *Beigeschmack*, that he objected, and not to its real meaning. When Velthuysen examined the "Theologico-Political Treatise," and pronounced its author an atheist, Spinoza answered the critic in a letter to Oosten by saying: "Atheists are accustomed excessively to seek honors and riches, which I have always despised, as all who are acquainted with me know."[1]

It is clear that he here refutes not the charge of atheism, but the charge of sordid ambition and avarice. His critic had said that "in order to shun the fault of superstition, he seems to me to have cast off all religion." Replying to this, Spinoza says: "What he means by religion and by superstition, I know not. But I ask, Does that one cast off all religion who maintains that God is to be recognized as the highest good, and as such is to be loved with a free mind?

[1] Epis. 43, (olim 49), p. 347.

And that in this alone consists our supreme happiness and freedom? And further that the reward of virtue is virtue itself, but the punishment of folly and weakness is folly itself? And then that everyone should love his neighbor and obey the commands of the constituted authorities?"[1] With the exception of the words with which he refers to "God," these indignant questions are irrelevant; for it was not asserted that he taught immorality, but that he was an atheist.[2] And even the language with which he refers to "God" is relevant only in so far as the word is understood in its theistic sense, and is *not* thought with the content put into it by Spinoza. In calling him an atheist,—if he used the term in its real sense as implying simply an anti-religious theory of the world, with no reflections on personal character,—Velthuysen gave Spinoza a title to which, in a less intolerant age, he himself would not have objected. Of the title "God-intoxicated philosopher," he would certainly have been ashamed.

To those who have never had occasion to study Spinoza at first hand, and are accustomed to hear him referred to as a religious mystic, the result which we have reached will seem strange indeed. The mistaken conception of the man and of his phil-

[1] Epis. 43, Opera II, 348.

[2] One of Velthuysen's sentences does seem to insinuate that the author (whom apparently he does not know) of the Theologico-Political Treatise is probably immoral: "Cujus gentis ille sit, aut quod vitae institutum sequatur, me fugit, etiam nihil interest id scire." (Epis. 42). This, with the prevalent assumption that atheistic doctrine is necessarily immoral, justifies, of course, Spinoza's reference to his own life and his vindication of the moral character of his teaching; but this vindication of the practical soundness of his views does not constitute a repudiation of theoretical atheism.

osophy, which is as common as it is remarkable, is due not simply to his misleading use of language, but to several other circumstances, one of which is the patent fact that *formally* his system has much in common with the most intensely religious conceptions of the world. According to him the ulitmate reality is an immanent cause,[1] in a certain sense therefore, omnipresent. It needed only to be mistaken for a living self-consciousness, in order to become a religious object of the most perfect kind. It is quite intelligible, therefore, that in the Eighteenth Century, when Deism had effected an artificial separation between God and the world, and had created a shallow religious consciousness, Spinoza's philosophy seemed to some essentially religious. The reaction against the irreligious world-view of Deism prepared an enthusiastic reception for the newly-discovered antithetical one presented by Spinoza, although in its real meaning this was irreligious also. I say newly-discovered, for Spinoza's philosophy, which on account of its atheism had been neglected for a hundred years and, if read at all, had been read in the closet and had never been mentioned except *sotto voce*, burst on the intellect of the waning Eighteenth Century like a new revelation. By interpreting it in the sense of their own needs, men like Herder, who were dominated by religious and aesthetic interests, found in it everything which they missed in the current philosophy. In Spinoza's doctrine they thought they met again the God "in whom we live and move and have our being." Even Jakobi, who was clear-headed enough to recognize

[1] Although his doctrine of immanence is not entirely consistent, as we have seen.

unqualifiedly Spinoza's atheism, once permitted himself to say, notwithstanding his strong religious bias, that it would be stupidity to prefer certain "theistic" systems to "the infinitely more religious atheism of a Spinoza."[1]

Another circumstance that prevented the system from being universally recognized in its true character as atheism in an age when atheist was an abusive epithet implying moral turpitude, is the philosopher's freedom from sordid passions, and the coincidence of many of his practical doctrines with those of Christianity. He inculcates the love of men (in his own sense), and censures ambition, intemperance, love of money, etc., as earnestly as do the Christian Scriptures. But his teaching has quite other grounds. For him the vices named are follies and vanities, partly because they are clearly seen to be the cause of more injury than advantage to the individual, and partly because they do not appeal to one whose only interest is knowledge,—for the pursuit of knowledge is for him the highest activity of man. In Spinoza's view, therefore, these things are follies and vanities *only;* for religion (Christianity) they are not only follies and vanities, but sins; they contradict the will and character of a postulated divine person.

While his practical maxims have thus their points of contact with religious ethics, they present also many points of contrast,—a fact not generally recognized outside of philosophical circles, and that because the only words of his commonly quoted are those which, in their *prima facie* value, seem to express Christian ideas. One fundamental and all-

[1] Wider Mendelssohns Beschuldigungen, pp. 86-87.

pervading difference between Spinoza's ethics and religious ethics lies in the fact that in Spinoza's teaching emotional elements are quite supplanted by rational insight. For the question before us, it is a matter of little consequence that Spinoza's practical maxims are often identical with those of Christianity. All systems of morality substantially agree in regard to what we should do and leave undone in practical life; they notably differ only in regard to the ultimate grounds which they offer for moral conduct. Schopenhauer has well said: "To preach morality is easy; to ground morality is difficult," and "In all times much and good morality has been preached; but its rational grounding has always been in a bad plight." For the sake of showing more clearly the relation of Spinoza's ethics to the ethics of religion, and for the sake of verifying the conclusion to which we have been compelled by a study of Spinoza's idea of "God," we now turn to a critical examination of those conceptions which have often been mistaken for expressions of religious mysticism.

# PART II.

# PARTICULAR DOCTRINES AND EXPRESSIONS SUPPOSED TO IMPLY RELIGIOUS VIEWS AND INTEREST

## CHAPTER I.

### "THE INTELLECTUAL LOVE OF GOD."

The reader who has had the patience to follow us thus far will not be surprised to learn that Spinoza's doctrine of the intellectual love of God, like many other conceptions of his system, is involved in obscurities and contradictions. To trace all these out in detail, would lead us into tedious digressions.[1] For our purpose it will be sufficient to determine simply what Spinoza meant. The expression itself, as well as the language employed in deducing it, were evidently determined by the desire to commend to the favor of a prejudiced public a non-religious doctrine by clothing it in language redolent of religious associations. Spinoza's treatment of *Amor Dei intellectualis* and of the "eternity of the soul" presents, in fact, characteristic examples of his practical application of the maxim commended by him to all those who would propagate philosophical truth: *Ad captum vulgi loqui, et illa omnia operari, quae nihil impedimenti adferunt, quo minus nostrum scopum attingamus. Nam non parum emolumenti ab eo possumus acquirere, modo ipsius captui, quantum fieri potest, concedamus; adde, quod tali modo amicas praebebunt aures ad veritatem audiendam.*[2]

[1] Anyone desiring to consult a brief account of how this doctrine is related to the rest of Spinoza's system is referred to a monograph by C. Lüllman "Ueber den Begriff Amor Dei intellectualis bei Spinoza,"—Jena, 1884. On the whole this treatise is a sufficiently clear and accurate presentation of the subject.

[2] De Intellectus Emendatione, p. 6.

This maxim, as was natural, controlled him at some times more than at others, according to his varying moods and the varying tone of his environment. That the Fifth Part of the "Ethics," which treats chiefly of *Amor Dei intellectualis*, should exhibit a maximum amount of religious language employed in an accommodated sense, is perhaps due to the fact that this last Part was hastily written at the time when his "Theologico-Political Treatise" was being assailed most violently as the work of a dangerous atheist.[1] How distressing was the prospect of strife may be inferred from the fact that, when he came to face the immediate venture, he changed his mind and deferred publication indefinitely.

His definition of *Amor Dei intellectualis* is given in Eth. V, 32, cor.: "From the third kind of knowledge arises necessarily the intellectual love of God. For from this kind of knowledge arises joy accompanied by the idea of God as cause, that is the love of God not as he is presented by the imagination, but as perceived by the intellect to be eternal; and this is what I call the intellectual love of God."

The third kind of knowledge (*scientia intuitiva*), it will be remembered, is that which "proceeds from the adequate idea of the real essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essense of things."[2] It is assumed to be an immediate insight into the causal relation that obtains between a particular thing and its ultimate ground (the attributes of substance), and hence to involve a knowledge of the constitution of the thing. In other

[1] See above p. 36.
[2] Eth. II, 40, sch. 2.

words, it is the vision of things in relation to their first cause. With this kind of knowing "the intellectual love of God" is preëminently associated, though Spinoza does not here, or elsewhere, assert, what would be without logical justification, that intuition is the only kind of knowing which conditions a "love of God." Indeed he generally assumes that all adequate knowledge should be accompanied by this result.

If, in his exposition of the intellectual love of God, he did not quote[1] the above-given definition of intuition, according to which it is limited to the discovery of the nature (or essence) of particular things; and, if he did not in this connection emphasize this distinctive characteristic,[2] we should naturally suppose that here he consciously uses the term in a wider sense as applying to the mere recognition of all existing objects as modes of the absolute attributes. If we limited it to a knowledge of the essences of particular things, we should be logically compelled to regard the intellectual love of God which accompanies intuition as a fiction, or, at most, as something conceived as merely possible. For he confesses elsewhere that the things he himself has learned by the third kind of cognition are "extremely few" (*perpauca*), and we know that there were none. But if he never gained any knowledge by intuition, he never experienced the particular kind or degree of intellectual love of God which he

[1] Eph. V, 25, dem.

[2] Eth. V, 36, schol.—"Quod hic notare operae pretium duxi, ut hoc exemplo ostenderem, quam rerum singularium cognitio, quam intuitivam sive tertii generis appellavi, polleat, potiorque sit cognitione universali, quam secundi generis esse dixi.

associates with that kind of knowledge. It is evident, therefore, that, notwithstanding his references to the concise definition previously given of the third kind of knowing, his thought about it here is extremely vague.

Recognizing that the *scientia intuitiva* is not the only condition of the intellectual love of God, but is (or might be) its most suitable condition, this "love" may be described as the joy experienced in an act of cognition, provided this joy is accompanied by the knowledge of "God" as its cause. The definition is justified by referring to Part III, definition 6, where love in general (*amor*) is defined as "joy accompanied by the idea of an external cause."[1] It will be observed that *amor*, thus defined, does not answer to the specific meaning which usage has attached to the English word "love." This can appropriately be employed only with reference to a personal object. But Spinoza's definition of *amor* does not in any way imply that it is an attitude toward persons, and hence he is entirely consistent in speaking of *amor* toward the impersonal aggregate of attributes which he has seen fit to call "God." It must be recognized, however, that with equal consistency, and indeed with eminent propriety, he could speak of the love of a triangle; for, in solving a problem in geometry, it is quite possible to experience a mental joy accompanied by the idea of that figure as its cause.

In order to appreciate fully the precise value of Spinoza's expression "idea of God as cause," it is

[1] The absence of the word "external" from the definition of the love of God, is not without logical significance in his total account of the doctrine.

necessary to recall just what he understands by a knowledge of God. He has already told us that "The human mind has an adequate knowledge of the eternal and infinite essence of God,"[1]—an assertion that is proved by referring to preceding propositions where it has been shown that "every idea of every body, or actually existing thing, necessarily involves the eternal and infinite essence of God;"[2] inasmuch as every existing thing is a mode (a particular sample) of one or both of the universal properties extension and thought, which are attributes of the absolute substance and hence by definition constitute "the essence of the same."[3] Or, to employ his own language, "Particular things cannot be conceived without God; but, because they have for their cause God in so far as he is considered under the attribute of which the things in question are modes, their ideas must necessarily involve the conception of the attribute of those things, i. e., the eternal and infinite essence of God."[4] It necessarily follows, of course, that "the infinite essence of God and his eternity are known to all men,"[5] and that this knowledge is as clear as that of a triangle.[6] To have the idea of God as the cause of the joy experienced in a given act of knowledge, therefore, is simply to recognize the immediate object as deducible from the absolute reality, i. e., when expressed in ultimate terms, to recognize it as a mode of extension or of thought.

[1] Eth. II, 47.
[2] Eth. II, 45.
[3] Eth. I, def. 4.
[4] Eth. II, 45, dem.
[5] Eth. II, 47, schol.
[6] Epis. 56 (olim 60), p. 378.

The "particular things" that involve the idea of God may, of course, be bodies, or thoughts, or affects (*affecti*). In regard to the last it is said that "he who clearly and distinctly understands himself and his affects, loves God, and by so much the more as he more understands himself and his affects;"[1] which is circumstantially demonstrated as follows: "There is no affection of the body, of which the mind may not form some clear and distinct conception (prop. 4, Part V.);" but, as "whatever is, is in God, and nothing can be or be conceived without God (prop. 15, Part I.)," it is evident that in forming a clear and distinct conception of any affection, we may relate—in fact, must relate—that affection to "God," i. e., if conceived as a mere bodily affection, to the attribute of extension, or, if conceived as both physical and psychical, to the attributes of extension and thought together. But in clear and distinct knowledge the mind experiences an augmentation of its power and perfection, and this is what has been defined as joy (prop. 9, schol. and prop. 53, Part III.). Finally the joy of clear and distinct knowledge of any affection,—being necessarily accompanied by the idea of the attribute under which the affection is conceived and of which it is a consequence, or, in other words, by the "idea of God,"—is referred ultimately to "God;" and, as joy accompanied by the idea of a cause is what we mean by love, this is the "love of God."[2] The circumstance that the affect may be an unworthy one and must nevertheless, according to the logic of Spinoza's rea-

[1] Eth. V, 15.

[2] We have supplied the contents of the references contained in the demonstration.

soning, be the proximate object of love, should not disconcert us; for any affect considered as an object of knowledge, is a cause of joy and hence a proper object of "intellectual" love. Elsewhere he has consistently observed that "the affects of hatred, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, result from the same necessity and efficacy of nature as do other particular things; and hence are due to certain causes through which they are understood, and possess certain properties no less worthy of our knowledge than are the properties of any other thing, *in the mere contemplation of which we take delight.*"[1]

The "intellectual love of God," therefore, when stripped of its religious associations and defined in terms of its equivalents as expressly given by Spinoza himself, turns out to be, not an affection felt for a self-conscious and responsive being, as has sometimes been naïvely assumed, but only the mental joy experienced in cognitive processes, together with such valuation of the object of knowledge conditioning the joy as is appropriate to that experience; in other words, it is nothing but delight in the intelligible as intelligible. For him "Truth is God, and God is truth,"[2] in the sense that adequately known reality, whatever it may be, is the only God he recognizes. The matter of supreme value is not the object, but adequate knowledge of it. This is called "love" not because in his own experience, or in the possible experience of any human being who clearly accepts his metaphysical system, there is any-

[1] Eth. III, Introductory paragraph. Cf. Tractatus Politicus, p. 270. The italics are ours.

[2] Korte Verhandeling, II, Cap. 15.—" . . . dat God de Waarheid, of dat de Waarheid God zelve is." Cf. II, Cap. 5.

thing that really resembles love (which would be a psychological impossibility), but because the word, when conjoined with "God" brings his doctrine into *verbal* harmony with religion. That it is not the object which is valued, but the experience of knowledge, appears from the equivalents of the intellectual love of God; for it is in fact but one of several titles for the *summum bonum.* In the "Theologico-political Treatise," he says: "Since the better part of us is our intellect, it is certain, if we wish truly to seek our advantage, that we should endeavor above all to perfect it as much as possible; for in its perfection must consist our *summum bonum.* Moreover, since all our knowledge and the certainty that removes every doubt depend solely on the knowledge of God,—in the first place, because without God [absolute thought and extension] nothing can be or be conceived; in the second place, because we are able to doubt concerning all things so long as we have no clear and distinct idea of God [thought and extension as the ground from which all nature results by an invariable necessity],—it follows that our *summum bonum* and perfection depend solely on the knowledge of God."[1] Here it is the *possession* of knowledge that is called our *summum bonum*; and God is to be known only because he is the key to all other knowledge. It is but a variation of the same thought when, in the paragraph from which we have quoted, he identifies the knowledge of God with the knowledge of "natural things," and adds: "And so all our knowledge, i. e., our *summum bonum*, not only depends on God, but consists altogether in the same." In other passages the highest good is said to consist

[1] Chap. IV, (Opera, II, p. 3).

in the *experience* of cognition, "*in sola speculatione et pura mente.*"* Sometimes, however, knowledge or "the knowledge of God" (of our environment), is regarded as a means to the ulterior end of a righteous (genuinely prudent and advantageous) life. As these inconsistencies are the result of viewing the same thing, knowledge, in different relations to our total experience, we need not take them very seriously. It is sufficiently clear that, according to Spinoza, man's supreme good is knowledge; which, because it must have nature in some aspect for its object, is brought into verbal harmony with religion by the title "intellectual love of God."

We are now in a position to estimate that saying of Spinoza's which so deeply impressed Goethe:[1] "He who loves God cannot presume that God love him in return."[2] The proof of this proposition consists in the circumstance that God (as absolute) "loves no one," and that he who should wish to be loved by God would thereby wish that God were not God, which would be an inconsistency. That the saying should impress Goethe, or any uncritical reader, as an expression of sublimely unselfish religious devotion, is not surprising; but when read in the light shed upon it by Spinoza's own lamp, it is found to be entirely devoid of religious significance. It may justly be taken, however, as an appropriate expression of Spinoza's passionate devotion to truth as truth; for the one who loves God, in his sense of the term, has no other interest than to know reality as it is, be it good or bad, beautiful or ugly.

* Chap. IV, (Opera, II, p. 4).

[1] Aus Meinem Leben, 14 Buch, (Hendel's edition, p. 541).

[2] Eth. V, 19 and dem.

By way of qualification of what has been said above, it ought to be remarked that in the "Short Treatise" stress is laid upon the quality of the object as conditioning love. "True love" says he in a characteristic passage, "always springs from the knowledge that the thing is glorious and good. What else then can follow but that it cannot become more ardent toward any one than toward the Lord our God? For he alone is glorious and the perfect good."[1] When he says here that love requires particular qualities in the object, he is quite correct; but this is a way of speaking which he abandons in the "Ethics." In advance of careful study, this circumstance would naturally be explained by supposing that, whatever may be thought of Spinoza's final attitude, the "Short Treatise" represents a time when he certainly possessed a genuine religious interest. If we cannot accept this explanation, it is not because either a theist's antipathy or an atheist's admiration impels us arbitrarily to divest Spinoza, even in his youth, of all appreciation for religion; but because neither in the extant biographical data, nor in the early work itself, can we find anything that justifies the hypothesis. It seems to us to owe its currency to nothing better than *naïveté* and prejudice in about equal parts. When we penetrate beneath the surface of his language to its real content, as defined by himself, we discover that the seeming religiousness is not meaning, but phraseology. We have seen that here more explicitly, if possible, than anywhere else he has deprived the Absolute of all personal qualities, excluding even the cognitive consciousness; for among the

[1] Korte Verhandeling, II, Cap. 5, ad. fin.

attributes which "do *not* belong to God"[1] are "will," "intellect," "omniscence." In the "Short Treatise," as in the "Ethics," the object of "love" possesses no properties which, psychologically speaking, can condition love;[2] and so we are compelled to regard the religious phraseology of the early work as also due to a desire to commend to favor his proposed substitute for religion by clothing it in the language of religious devotion. That, here more frequently than in the "Ethics," he employs expressions that are glaringly inconsistent with the defined character of the object, is to be explained by the circumstance that the "Short Treatise" exhibits his first and more awkward attempts at describing a non-religious system in terms of religion. It would be possible to suppose that his language represents a genuine religious interest, and is seriously intended to express such, only on the assumption that his conception of the Absolute was at this time still so unclear to himself that he tacitly read into it the qualities of which he expressly deprived it; but this is an impossible assumption; for, however numerous the obscurities and inconsistencies of his system in its details, there is, even in this early work, no unclearness and uncertainty in his thought about the general character of fundamental reality. That while composing it he was under great constraint to clothe his novel ideas in religious phraseology, we may infer from his apprehension that even

[1] Kort. Verhand. I, Cap. 7.

[2] The positive qualities of "God" which he specifies as constituting Him a proper object of "love" turn out to be only different aspects of the changeless necessity of nature, or of the absoluteness of nature. See Kort. Verhand. II, Cap. 14 and I, Cap. 6.

the young friends to whom he was confidentially to entrust the manuscript might be startled by his doctrine, and that the public would be provoked to disagreeable, perhaps dangerous, opposition, if his work were freely circulated. In the closing paragraph he begs his friends "not to be astonished at these novelties," reminding them that truth does not cease to be truth because it is accepted by few; and adds: "And, on account of the character of the age in which we live, of which you are not ignorant, I will earnestly entreat you to exercise great care in communicating these things to others."[1]

We have called "the intellectual love of God" Spinoza's substitute for religion. From this characterization, however, it must not be inferred that he believed it could ever become a general possession. In any efficacious degree, it can be possessed only by the select few, the metaphysicians, who, being emancipated from the imagination and the emotions, view all things in the colorless light of reason. He did not share the hope occasionally expressed in recent times, that knowledge will some day become so widely diffused that men in general will rise above religion and then do from rational insight what they now do from faith. The ideas of development in general and of social progress in particular, which have so deeply taken hold of the modern mind, are foreign to Spinoza's thought. He had little faith in the "masses." He assumes that they must always remain incapable of a genuine and efficacious intellectual love of God. His chief work concludes with the following significant words: "If now the way which I have shown to lead to these

[1] Opera, III, p. 97.

things seems very difficult (*perardua*), it can nevertheless be discovered. And difficult indeed must that be which is so rarely found. For if salvation were ready at hand and could be found without much labor, how could it happen that it would be neglected by almost all men? But all excellent things are as difficult as they are rare."* In the unfinished "Political Treatise," he expresses the same thought: "We have seen that the way which reason teaches is very difficult; hence those who persuade themselves that the multitude, or men distracted by public business, can be induced to live solely according to the dictates of reason, are dreaming of the poets' golden age or of a fabulous tale."[1] For Spinoza also, many are called, but few are chosen!

This subject ought not to be dismissed without a reference to the interesting ways in which he uses the *Amor Dei intellectualis*, in order to deduce from it verbal imitations of still other religious conceptions. He affirms that "God loves himself with an infinite intellectual love,"[2] and that the mind's intellectual love to God is the very love of God, with which God loves himself, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he is able to be expressed by the essence of the human mind, considered under the form of eternity, i. e., the mind's intellectual love to God is a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself."[3] From this it follows as a corollary that "God, in so far as he loves himself, loves men, and consequently that God's love to men and the mind's

* Eth. V, 42, schol.

[1] Tractatus-Politicus, Cap. I, (Opera, I, p. 271).

[2] Eth. V, 35.

[3] Eth. V, 36.

intellectual love to God, are one and the same thing."[1]

After having just been told, consistently with what we have found to be Spinoza's conception of the Absolute, that "God properly speaking loves no one,"[2] the reader naturally finds this language perplexing. But when it is remembered that Spinoza employs the word "God" in two distinct senses, now for the Absolute (Natura Naturans) and now for total reality including all modes (Natura Naturans and Natura Naturata —possibly sometimes also for Natura Naturata alone), the contradiction is seen to be only a verbal one. "God loves himself with an infinite love," because (says the demonstration) he is by definition absolutely infinite, and hence, as reality and perfection mean the same thing, his "nature" enjoys infinite perfection, and that accompanied by the idea of himself; for, according to the principle of parallelism, there is in God an idea of his essence and an idea of everything that results from his essence; that is to say, God's enjoyment of infinite perfection is accompanied by the idea of himself as cause (for he is *causa sui*); and this is what is called intellectual love.[3] This language means no more than that all modes, which together constitute the Natura Naturata, have "minds,"[4] and the sum of these constitute the Intellectus Infinitus, the sum of the intellectual love of separate minds being the infinite

[1] Eth. V, 36, Cor.

[2] Eth. V, 17, Cor.

[3] I have paraphrased the demonstration, completing it by writing in the content of the references contained in it.

[4] See page 66.

intellectual love with which God (as Natura Naturata) loves himself (as Natura Naturata and Natura Naturans). This interpretation does not, of course, set the proposition and demonstration free from all difficulties and bring them into harmony with everything else in his system, and no interpretation can do so;[1] for his ideas here are involved in the unclearness of his thought concerning the Intellectus Infinitus and other conceptions; but that this is what he means is placed beyond doubt by his oft-repeated declaration that God (the Absolute) cannot love and has no intellect, and by the close connection of this proposition with the two following.

The meaning of the second proposition, namely, that "the mind's intellectual love to God is the very love of God, with which God loves himself, not in so far as he is infinite, but in so far as he is able to be expressed by the essence of the human mind, considered under the form of eternity, etc.," is already sufficiently evident. The expression "under the form of eternity" simply limits the subject of intellectual love to the rational part of the mind as distinguished from the imagination; and so we have the very obvious statement that man as a part of God (Natura Naturata) loves God (Natura Naturata, Natura Naturans, or both), i. e., that God loves

[1] The verbal consistency of the demonstration is due to his use of the same expressions in different senses. After God is proved to be "absolutely infinite" by a reference to the definition of God in which the word is taken in the sense of the Absolute only, the word is then employed in the sense of God as including Natura Naturata and therewith the human mind. It is not God as *causa sui* that has the *idea* of God as *causa sui*; this idea is possessed by God in so far as He is *not causa sui*, i. e., in so far as the name may by accommodation be applied to a definite mode, the human mind.

God. But Spinoza's demonstration is quite circumstantial. Instead of saying, as he might have done, that in rationally cognizing objects in general the mind experiences joy accompanied by the idea of God as cause, and that this "intellectual love of God" possessed by man as a part of God (Natura Naturata) is a part of the infinite intellectual love with which God loves himself, he selects for the purposes of the demonstration that particular intellectual love which arises from the mind's contemplation of itself. The mind's love, he says, must be referred to the active functions of the mind as distinguished from the passive, because it is an experience of joy, the sign of proper activity,[1] and because it is adequate knowledge, which is also a sign of activity.[2] It is therefore the activity with which the mind contemplates himself accompanied by the idea of the contemplation of any other object under the form of eternity, involves the idea of God (substance) as the necessary ground of its existence.[3] Now, as particular things—to which class of things the human mind belongs—are only modes of the attributes of God, and as when we say "that the human mind perceives this or that we say nothing else than that God, not as infinite,[4] but in so far as he is expressed by the nature of the human mind, has this or that idea;"[5] it follows that the mind's contemplation of itself is the activity with which God, in so far as he can be expressed by the human mind,

[1] Eth. V, 32, Cor. [2] Eth. III, 3.

[3] Eth. V, 32, dem. and cor. Cf. prop. 30, dem.

[4] Notice that "infinite" is here used to contrast God as absolute with "God" as *natura naturata*, while in V, 35, dem. the predicate is applied to "God" as including *natura naturata*.

[5] Eth. II, 11, Cor.

contemplates himself accompanied by the idea of himself; and so this love of the mind's is a part of the infinite love with which God loves himself.[1]

It will be observed that, although the subject of the intellectual love is clearly the human mind (God in so far, etc.), the object of it is supposed to be God the Absolute. The double sense of the word, however, enables Spinoza to assume for the purposes of the corollary which follows, that the object also is only the human mind.[2] The corollary states "that God, in so far as he loves himself, loves men, and consequently that God's love to men and the mind's intellectual love to God are one and the same thing." This is unintelligible unless (1) we take the object of love to be not God the Absolute, but "God in so far," etc., i. e., the human mind; and unless (2) we identify "men" and "the mind," thus taking mind in the generic sense as embracing only what is common to all minds. On this condition, we are able to write the following equation: the mind's love of itself = men's love to men = God's love to men = God's love to himself. When God and man are identified, the corollary becomes simply a tautology; and there is no reason for doubting that this is what it was meant to be.

[1] It is not easy to see why Spinoza chose so complicated a demonstration involving irrelevancies, for a proposition which needs only to be explained in order to be self-evident. His selection of the mind as the cognized object with which to operate may be due to a desire to bring his exposition into the greatest formal resemblance to religious mysticism.

[2] This circumstance causes Martineau to interpret (mistakenly, I think) the proposition also as wishing to say no more than that man loves man:—"Objectively, the *self* which God loves is the *human*, considered as also divine." Study of Spinoza, p. 273.

## CHAPTER II.

## IMMORTALITY.

While the doctrine of immortality is an essential part of Christianity and is agreeable to the religious consciousness in general, there is nothing in the nature of the case that renders it indispensable to religion as such. There is no conclusive evidence, it seems, that even the early Hebrews believed in a future life. On the other hand, the doctrine is not incompatible with atheism. Whether it is a *religious* doctrine or not, depends on whether it is such as to imply personal relations with a God. It is these relations that constitute religion; and a doctrine of immortality that does not imply them is not religious doctrine. The question, therefore, whether or not Spinoza taught the immortality of the soul, is not, strictly speaking, pertinent to our inquiry. For considering his conception of God, it is obvious that, if he did teach immortality, his doctrine was not a religious one. It is well worth while, however, for the sake of further light on his modes of thought and expression, to examine what he has to say on the subject.

His account of the matter underwent considerable changes during the period between his first and last works. In the "Metaphysical Thoughts," where he considers the question for the first time, the immortality of the soul is unequivocally affirmed, as necessarily following from the nature of the soul as substance (created substance): "But since from

them [the laws of nature] it clearly follows that a substance can be destroyed neither by itself nor by another created substance, as, if I mistake not, we have already abundantly demonstrated, we are compelled to conclude from the laws of nature that the mind is immortal.''[1] But as he has warned[2] us that this work contains much that he himself did not believe, we are at a loss to tell in how far his disquisition on immortality was a mere statement of the current theological argument which he did not consider valid, and in how far it was an expression of his own views.

In the ''Short Treatise'' the immortality of the soul is affirmed again, but on entirely different grounds, namely, as resulting from the knowledge and love of God, and from a consequent union with him. It is therefore no longer natural, but conditional. Doubts as to Spinoza's real interest in the matter are suggested not only by the general character of this work, seeking everywhere, as it does, to substitute by an accommodated use of religious language non-religious for religious conceptions,[3] but also by the worthlessness of his reasoning, when regarded as an argument for individual immortality. He argues as follows: The soul is naturally the idea of the body, and is therefore united with the body

[1] Cog. Met. Cap. XII, p. 229.

[2] See page 58.

[3] In order to estimate at its true value the "religious mysticism" of the "Short Treatise," it must be borne in mind that "God," as absolute thought and extension, is already without understanding, that Providence is identified with the striving after self-preservation, that the efficacy of prayer is rejected, that sin is non-existent, that "regeneration" becomes simply the awakening of the philosophical interest, etc., etc.

in such a way as to depend on it for existence. Hence when the body changes, the soul changes; when the body perishes, the soul perishes. This relation between the two is called indifferently the soul's *union* with the body and the soul's *love* of the body. But both soul and body depend on the Absolute in such a way that they can neither be nor be conceived without him (or it). Now the mind that intuitively recognizes this relation, the mind that cannot rest in the conditioned, but by intuition traces everything back to its ultimate ground, enters into a knowledge and love of the Absolute which is analogous to the ordinary union with the body. And as this object is changeless and eternal, the soul that is "united" with it is also eternal, and will survive the dissolution of the physical organism.[1]

This argument consists in the two extraordinary assumptions, (1) that the connection between the unconditioned and the conditioned is less real for being unknown, and (2) that the eternity of an object of knowledge is a proof of the eternity of the knowing subject.[2] The only kind of immortality for which such reasoning has the semblance of validity, would be one in which the individual mind, after the dissolution of the body into the more general modes of matter, is itself dissolved into the general mind; for mind which, by virtue of "union with God," survives would be mind as the "idea" of the general constituents and laws of the universe, as distinguished from mind as the "idea" of a particular body.

[1] Korte Verhand, II, cap. 23.

[2] But similar reasoning appears in Neo-Platonism.

Whether, in the "Short Treatise," he seriously meant to advocate individual immortality or not, it is impossible to determine with certainty.[1] We may affirm only that, if he did, it was conditional and partial immortality—an immortality for philosophers exclusively. His own language reads as follows:

"If we will consider carefully what the soul is, and from what its change and duration result, we shall easily see, whether it is mortal or immortal. We have said that the soul is an idea originating in the *res cogitans* from the existence of a thing that is present in nature. Hence it follows, that according to the duration and change of the thing, must be the duration and change of the soul. At the same time, we observed that the soul may be united either with the body, of which it is the idea, or with God, without whom it can neither exist nor be conceived. Wherefore it is easy to see: (1) that, if united with the body alone, and the body perishes, it must also perish; for, being deprived of the body, which is the foundation of its love, it must come to naught therewith; but (2) that, if it is united with another thing which remains immutable, then it will on the contrary have to remain immutable also."[2]

In the last chapter of this work appears a different argument. There it is claimed that "*true* understanding" can never perish, for the reason that it is a consequence of the Absolute, and, as the Absolute is changeless and eternal, its consequence must be eternal also.[3] Of this reasoning the same may be said as of that quoted above,—it is valid for "true understanding" (adequate ideas) conceived either as general mind-stuff or as logical content (or con-

[1] Sigwart thinks it doubtful whether Spinoza had any real interest in the subject. Janet concludes that Spinoza intended to teach personal immortality.

[2] Korte Verhand. II, Cap. 23.

[3] Korte Verhand. II, Cap. 26, p. 95.

fusedly as both at once); but is not valid for true ideas psychologically considered, i. e., as *events* in consciousness. Whether by this language Spinoza meant to assert anything more than the eternity of truth, is uncertain.

In the "Ethics" his account of immortality undergoes another modification. It is still the result of a knowledge of "God," and especially, though not exclusively, of an intuitive knowledge. But his express and consistent admission in this work that all men in some degree have an adequate knowledge of God (inasmuch as they have an immediate knowledge of extension and thought),[1] requires that immortality be no longer limited to the philosophers, but extended to all men, though in varying degrees, according to the proportion of adequate knowledge. All souls, in so far as they are imagination, perish; in so far as they are intellect, survive. In the "Ethics," immortality is partial in the sense that it applies only to a part of each mind; in the "Short Treatise," it is partial in the further sense that it falls to the lot of but few individuals. A significant difference in terminology also appears; in the "Short Treatise" the soul is "immortal," in the "Ethics" it is never anything else than "eternal."

The passages which present the doctrine in its final form may be considered to advantage in the order of Spinoza's own exposition:

"Prop. 21.—The mind can neither imagine anything nor remember things past, except while the body lasts."[2]

[1] Eth. II, prop. 47.—"Mens humana adsequatam habet cognitionem aeternae et infinitae essentiae Dei."

[2] Eth. V, prop. 22 and dem.

As Spinoza employs "imagination" as a generic term that covers sense-perception, emotions, and all non-logical mental operations, it follows as indisputably certain (1) that according to Spinoza the mind can acquire no new facts after the dissolution of the body; (2) that it is no longer the seat of emotions, and is therefore in a state that lacks the interest and value which these impart to life; and (3) that, as memory vanishes with the body, personal identity is lost. The mind that survives does not know that it is the mind that was. Indeed, with memory gone, it has no means of knowing that it is itself. We may safely credit Spinoza with sufficient insight into psychological truths to have been fully aware of these obvious consequences of the proposition. The immortality promised by him, therefore, is already seen to be devoid of all religious significance and of all interest for us. After recognizing the extent of his negations, no positive determinations of the doctrine can be of any importance. Whatever it may turn out to be, it can not answer to the meaning of the word "immortality," and to call it by this name is misleading. Moreover, it is to employ a word which he himself, in his later writings, studiously avoids. His term is "eternity."

What this eternity of the intellect is, we must learn from the propositions immediately following:

"Prop. 22.—Yet in God [somewhere] there is necessarily an idea which expresses the essence of this and that human body under the form of eternity.

"Dem.—God is the cause not only of the existence, but also of the essence of this and that human body; which essence must therefore necessarily be conceived through the very essence of God, and that by a certain eternal

necessity; but this conception must necessarily be in God (since whatever is, is in God)."[1]

The language here employed means only that the human body, like every other particular thing, has two aspects. In one aspect it is changing, temporal, transient; in the other, in its essence or definable nature, it is eternal. This or that body, as a phenomenal existence at a particular time and place, disappears; but as an eternal essence, i. e., as constituted of certain elements and laws that have their ground in the eternal nature of matter, or, if you will, as participating in those general and permanent conditions which form the immediate background of particular existences, it is eternal. In like manner, "the idea of this or that body," i. e., this or that mind, has two aspects, one phenomenal, and the other eternal. In so far as it corresponds to the essence of its body conceived *sub specie aeternitatis* (in so far as it corresponds to the body as an eternal essence) it is also eternal, being as permanent and general in its character as is that material essence.[2] It follows, therefore, that

"The human mind cannot be absolutely destroyed with the body, but something of it remains which is eternal.

"Dem.—There is in God [there exists] necessarily a conception or idea which expresses the essence of the human body, and is therefore necessarily something that belongs to the essence of the human mind. But to the

[1] Eth. V, prop. 22 and dem.

[2] We have demonstrated that the *eternal* essences of particular things are universals. If the essence of "this and that" body is taken to be individual in character, we make Spinoza flatly contradict what he has plainly taught elsewhere. Cf. Eth. I, 17:—"Si unius [hominis] existentia pereat, non ideo alterius peribit; sed si unius essentia destrui posset, et fieri falsa, destrueretur etiam alterius essentia." See also the way in which "definita

human mind we ascribe no duration definable in time, except in so far as it expresses the body's actual existence that is explicable by duration and is definable in time; that is, we do not ascribe duration to the same except while the body lasts. But since nevertheless there is something which by a certain eternal necessity is conceived through the very essence of God, this something which belongs to the essence of the mind will necessarily be eternal.

"Schol.—This idea which expresses the essence of the body *sub specie aeternitatis*, is, as we have said, a certain mode of thinking which belongs to the essence of the mind, and is necessarily eternal. Yet it is not possible to remember that we have had existence before the body, since there are no vestiges of it in the body, and eternity cannot be defined in terms of time, and has no relation to time. But nevertheless we apprehend (or feel)[1] and experience that we are eternal. For the mind apprehends (*sentit*) no less those things which it conceives with the understanding than those which it remembers. For the demonstrations themselves are for the mind eyes with which it sees and observes things. Although therefore we do not remember to have existed before the body, we apprehend *(sentimus)* nevertheless that our mind, in so far as it involves the essence of the body *sub specie aeternitatis*, is eternal, and that this existence is not definable in terms of time or explicable by duration. Our mind therefore may be said to endure, and its existence to be defined by a certain time, only in so far as it involves the actual existence of the body; and in so far only has it the power of determining the existence of things in time, and of conceiving them under the category of duration."[2]

natura" (essentia) is placed in antithesis to individuals in Eth. I, 8, schol. 2. It is not necessary to find in Eth. V, 22 a contradiction to his general doctrine of eternal essences; and if one chooses to do so, he will only multiply difficulties, without being able after all to make Spinoza teach a genuine immortality.

[1] "Sentimus."

[2] Eth. V, prop. 23 with dem. and schol.

The eternity which Spinoza thus sets in sharp contrast with "duration" and "time," must be understood as synonymous with timelessness. The ground for assuming such a state of being seems to be the perceived necessity and immutability of logical relations.* If his thought was clear, he meant by the term nothing else than changeless existence.

It might seem that he is describing a mere quality of being, implying no continuance; but I think we must allow that he means to claim a survival in some sense for a part of the human mind,—what would seem to be already sufficiently clear from the wording of the proposition.

The scholium implies, quite consistently, that the eternal part of the mind existed before the origination of the body in the same way as it continues to exist after the destruction of the same.[1] But in what way this is, does not at first appear quite obvious. In this connection there comes into play Spinoza's peculiar use of *idea*, *concipere*, etc. Primarily the eternal part of the mind is simply the psychical double of the eternal essence of the body, and is not a presentation which has this essence for its content; but secondarily, on account of Spinoza's intellectualistic psychology, it approximates in his thought the nature of a (complex) presentation[2] in so far that it becomes a system of truth. The eternity of the mind which we are said to experience, must not be

* Cf. Eth. V, prop. 29, schol.

[1] Cf. Eth. V, prop. 31, schol.

[2] Note how "concepit" is used in V, prop. 29. "Corporis praesentem actualem existentiam concipit" means only "possess an idea which is the psychical attendant of a temporal state of the body." The idea has for its content, not the body, but anything whatever.

mistaken for the vague sentiment of the poet or religionist: for Spinoza it is something involved in the cognitive consciousness. It is, in fact, the perception of the eternity of the content of adequate ideas; and this circumstance can be a ground for the survival of the mind only in so far as the mind is identified with adequate ideas, or rather with their logical *content*, with truth; which *consciously* survives only in the sense that it is re-thought by successive individuals.[1] So from one point of view the Intellectus Infinitus of which the human intellect is a part, is immutable; but from another point of view, by reason of the coming and going of individual minds, it is continually changing. In the latter aspect, as we had occasion to remark in another connection,[2] it suggests a correspondence with that mode of extension which he designates as *facies totius universi.*

This view of Spinoza's doctrine of the "eternity" of the soul fulfils the legitimate requirements of his language, and is the only one, it seems, that makes the doctrine tolerably consistent with the fundamental postulates of his system. It is confirmed by other expressions that speak more explicitly than those considered above. The intellectual love of God, which is the peculiar possession of the eternal part of the soul, is, he says, "the most constant of all affections, and, in so far as it is related to the body is not able to be destroyed, except with the body itself."[3] So it would seem that this love, which is no less eternal[4] than the intellect, is in some sense

[1] Cf. above p. 174.
[2] Cf. above p. 176.
[3] Eth. V, prop. 20, schol.
[4] Eth. V, prop. 34, cor.—Hinc sequitur, nullum amorem praeter amorem intellectualem esse aeternum.

perishable. In what sense? "In so far as it is related to the body." But what can this mean? Nothing more nor less than, in so far as it is peculiar to mind as associated with a particular self-identical body, i. e., in so far as it is the possession of one and the same individual mind.

Moreover, he expressly warns us that his doctrine of the mind's eternity,—which has no more application to personal post-existence than to personal pre-existence,—must not be confounded with any form of the popular doctrine of "immortality": "If we consider the common opinion of men, we shall see that they are indeed conscious of the eternity of their mind, but confound it with duration, and ascribe it to imagination or memory, which they believe remains after death."*

But in furnishing his system with a substitute for the Christian doctrine of immortality, and in clothing his substitute with rival glories, Spinoza has used language which uncritical readers have sometimes mistaken for a description of something far more significant than it is. And of the competent critics who have tried to determine his precise thought on this point, some have argued that he teaches individual self-conscious survival, not of the mind in its entirety indeed, but of the intellect at least. This follows necessarily, it is claimed,[1] from Spinoza's doctrine of *idea ideæ* or *idea mentis*,[2] which makes self-consciousness inherent in the nature of idea. For according to this, every idea as an ontological entity is an object which must be reflected in another idea.

* Eth. V, prop. 34, schol.

[1] See Camerer, "Die Lehre Spinoza's."

[2] See page 74.

So long as an idea exists, therefore, it must be self-conscious; and, if it is eternal, it must be eternally self-conscious. The force of this reasoning depends entirely on the mistaken assumption that the (complex) "idea" which survives as the eternal essence of the mind, is individual, and that the persistence of the eternal essence is the persistence of the individual mind. We have already discovered, however, that the eternal essences of things are not individual, but general.[1] The essence of the human mind, which is to be conceived both as relatively determinate mind-stuff and as a system of adequate ideas, is in one view as universal as the race, and in another as universal as truth. The eternal essence even of "this mind" and of "that mind" is a common essence, in which, to be sure, they as temporal phenomena may participate in different degrees. It is only as regards "existence," with the imagination, memory, etc., involved therein, that minds are distinct and separate. Accordingly there is for Spinoza a way of regarding the adequate ideas, which constitute the permanent part of the mind, as eternally conscious, without requiring the eternal continuity of any individual mind. By having regard only to the logical content, he may say that an adequate idea is universal, being the same for every mind possessing it; and also, if he chooses, that it is eternally conscious, for when it ceases to be an element in a particular consciousness it continues to be an element in some other consciousness. The same *essence* repeats itself eternally in different *existences*.

It is further argued that, since the human body is an *individuum*, the eternal part of the mind as the

[1] See page 150.

idea of the body *sub specie æternitatis* must also be an *individuum*, and that as *idea ideæ* it must have the same character.[1] This argument rests on the same mistaken assumption as does the foregoing one, namely, that the eternal essence, whether of the body or of the mind, is individual.[2]

The student of the history of philosophy will recognize in Spinoza's doctrine of the eternity of the mind striking points of resemblance with certain speculations of Aristotle, which, with varying fortunes, had been borne on the stream of tradition down to the time of our philosopher. Aristotle divided the reason (νοῦς) into two parts, the passive and the active. To the latter he attributed the power

[1] Camerer, "Die Lehre Spinoza's," pp. 118-122.

[2] In regard to the subject here concluded I am gratified to be able to agree substantially with so thorough and conscientious a student of Spinoza as James Martineau. See his "Study of Spinoza," pp. 289-301.

If any one should desire to pursue still further so barren a subject, he may compare Sir Fred. Pollock's "Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy;" Mr. A. E. Taylor in "Mind," April, 1896; . . . .

Mr. Pollock says of Spinoza's eternity of the mind: "It has no relation to time, and therefore is not a future life [or continuance of personal consciousness in the ordinary sense]. At the same time it is in some sense individual" (p. 270); and "What Spinoza is really maintaining in an artificial form is that the necessity and universal character of exact knowledge is not affected either by this and that particular act of knowledge being associated with a transitory condition of a bodily organism, or by tne act, as a particular human act, being subject to the conditions of our finite human consciousness" (p. 280).

Mr. Taylor reduces the eternal part of the mind "to two elements only, one cognitive and one emotional, the cognitive element being concrete but impersonal scientific truth, and the emotional the calm and acquiescence which such truth produces." "Mind" etc., p. 161. It has "continued existence after death," though "all that distinguishes one man from another has vanished" (p. 155).

of grasping in immediate knowledge what cannot be the object of mental processes (Spinoza's *scientia intuitiva*). It represents not what is individual, but what is common to men. It alone survives the body; while the passive part of the reason, together with sense-perception, imagination, memory, reflection, emotions, desire, and will, perish with the body.[1]

But Aristotle's distinction between the passive and active parts of the mind, and the inconsistencies of his account of the two, gave rise later to disputes as to whether both, or only one, or neither of them were perishable. Averroës, a Spanish Aristotelian of the twelfth century, with whose thoughts Spinoza must have been acquainted,[2] became the recognized champion of the view that it is the general human understanding which is eternal, the individual being its subject during life, and surviving death only in the sense that, when Socrates and Plato die, the speculative spirit remains, philosophy being eternal. He contended that this doctrine is not dangerous to morality, but, on the contrary, is the best protection against that pseudo-virtue which has in view only rewards and punishments. The wise man acts without regard to such things, prompted by the love of virtue alone.[3] That Spinoza

[1] Cf. Zeller, "Die Philosophie der Griechen," 3te aufl., 2ter Theil, 2te Abtheilung, ss. 563-607.

[2] If not directly, then certainly through Levi ben Gerson, whom he cites in "Trac. Theologico-Polit.," note 15, and through Maimonides, whose great work "Moreh Nebochim" (Doctor Perplexorum) was in Spinoza's library. See the list of books belonging to Spinoza's library in Freudenthal's "Die Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's," p. 160.

[3] Cf. Johann Ed. Erdmann's "History of Philosophy," § 187, 4-5.

was considerably influenced by these ideas can hardly be doubted.

It may here be remarked also that, in his estimate of religion in general, Spinoza quite agrees with Averroës: its postulates have no validity, but it is nevertheless of practical value for the weak and unreflective. If, in regard to the truth of this assertion, any doubts still linger in the reader's mind, they will be dispelled by an examination of what Spinoza has to say on the relation between Church and State.

## CHAPTER III.

## CHURCH AND STATE.

In a system that posits an impersonal and unethical[1] Absolute, from which result by a blind necessity all happenings throughout the entire realm of being, there is no place of course for divinely imposed obligations. Apart from the conventions of human society, right is synonymous with might. "The natural right of every individual extends as far as his power."[2] Spinoza does not hesitate, therefore, to express himself as follows: "Since it is the highest law of nature that each thing endeavor with all its might to maintain itself as it is, without regard to anything but itself, it follows that every individual thing has this supreme right, that is (as I have said) to exist and to act as it is determined by its own nature. Nor do we recognize any difference in this respect between men and other individuals of nature; nor again between men endowed with reason and those who are ignorant of true reason; nor between fools, the insane, and the sound-minded. For whatever each thing does according to the laws of its own nature, it does by supreme right, and for the obvious reason that it is determined by nature, and cannot do otherwise. Wherefore among men, so long as they are considered as living under the dominion of nature alone, the one who is

[1] Eth. I, prop. 33, schol. 2, p. 65.—Cf. Kort. Verh., I, Cap. 7, p. 33.

[2] Trac. Polit., Cap. 4, § 4.

not yet acquainted with reason or has not yet acquired the habit of virtue, exercises his supreme right when he lives according to his desires and impulses alone, no less than does the rational man when he directs his life according to the principles of reason."[1] "Hence whatever each one (regarded as under the dominion of nature alone) considers useful to himself, whether led by sound reason or impelled by his passions, he has a right, according to the supreme law of nature, to seek, and in any way, either by violence, or by craft, or by entreaties, or by any easier means, to obtain for himself."[2] To those who ask why God did not so create all men that they would conform to the dictates of reason, he consistently replies that it is "because God did not lack material for creating all things from the lowest to the highest degree of perfection; or, to speak more properly, because the laws of nature were so ample that they would suffice for producing all things conceivable by a hypothetical infinite intellect."[3]

The difference between Spinoza and theistic writers who define rights from the standpoint of civil society, applying the term to what is promised or secured by government, is this: for Spinoza, who identifies "God" with nature, the individual is not responsible to a transcendent being; while for the theist, who posits a transcendent being to whom the individual is responsible, there must be, even in a

[1] Tractatus Theol.-Polit. Cap. 16, pp. 121-2.

[2] Ibid. p. 122.

[3] Eth. I, Appendix, p. 71.—I have translated "aliquo infinito intellectu" by "hypothetical infinite intellect." The expression is evidence of what I have affirmed elsewhere that Spinoza does not have a place for a real, infinite intellect in the sense of a unitary consciousness.

state of nature (of anarchy), some limitations of natural might imposed by a divinely sanctioned morality.

Organized society exists, according to Spinoza, by virtue of the individual's surrender (either voluntary or compulsory) of his natural rights to a sovereign power. The rights of the government thus constituted are co-extensive with its power. The possessors of sovereign authority are now the source of all rights and can do no wrong. They may fall short of what is wise, but never of what is right.

When Spinoza says that all rights are dependent on the decree of the possessors of sovereign power, he expressly includes religious rights.[1] If it be asked: By what right, then, did the disciples of Christ preach a new religion? he answers that they did so by the power which they had received from Christ to perform miracles and to cast out unclean spirits; and warns us not to follow their example, unless we have been accredited in the same way.[2] But as Spinoza does not believe in miracles, this means of course that no one can ever lay claim to the right of propagating a new religion; although wise rulers will, from motives of policy, allow the devotees of strange religions to practice the same in peace, and to build temples, provided these are small and are situated at some distance from one another.[3] But if the possessors of sovereign power are wicked, impious men, are they still to be the rightful interpreters of religion? This question is answered by another: What if ecclesiastics are wicked, or seditious? If we

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. 19, p. 156.
[2] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. 19, p. 161.
[3] Trac. Polit., Cap. 8, § 46.

are compelled to choose between the two, we may more safely commit the spiritual authority to temporal rulers, whose private interests council moderation and regard for the welfare of the state, than to the ministers of religion, who are too often inspired by a lust for power, and in any case recognize an authority above that of the state.[1]

This arrangement, Spinoza thinks, would be calculated to secure to citizens freedom of thought. For it is the ecclesiastics, controlling the civil authority, who have always been responsible for the persecution of scholars and thinkers. The civil authority as such, having no more interest in one metaphysical opinion than another, would have no occasion to interfere with the freest scientific and philosophical investigations. Moreover, temporal rulers can more easily be convinced that it is extremely unwise to undertake to control the thinking of citizens, or to forbid the expression of opinion.

Although the rights of rulers over religion are absolute, it is assumed that the actual control in a wise government will extend only so far as to secure the subjection of the ecclesiastical organization and to prevent factious controversies and religious persecutions. No temples, in a monarchy at least, are to be built from public funds,[2] and no laws are to be made in regard to religious opinions, however erratic and extravagant, unless they are seditious and tend to subvert the state.[3] But large religious assemblies

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., p. 163 et passim.

[2] Trac. Polit., Cap. 6, § 40.

[3] This qualification would seem to open the door to religious persecutions again.

should be prohibited as calculated to disturb the public peace.[1]

In order to understand the earnestness with which Spinoza deals with the problem of church and state, we must remember that he lived at a time when European states were just emerging from the tyranny of ecclesiastical usurpations, that the reformed churches often aspired to succeed in their respective countries to the authority of the Church of Rome, that they were engaged in intemperate controversies, and that the Thirty Years' War was fresh in his memory. In the United States of America the problem has been solved by a complete separation of church and state. But to Spinoza, a child of the Seventeenth Century, this solution did not occur as a possible one.

His views on this subject concern us only in so far as they reveal his estimate of religion. Since religion, according to him, is to be subjected absolutely to the government, and to be reduced to a mere instrument of civil society,[2] it possesses no absolute worth. Morality, of course, is of supreme importance to the state, but *religion* as such is a sort of necessary evil, to which government must adjust itself,—necessary because most men are incurably ignorant and thoughtless, incapable of being guided by reason. One cult is as good as another, provided it teaches the masses respect for authority and other civil virtues.

His view is further illustrated by his distinction between philosophy and theology. Between the two

[1] Trac. Polit., Cap. 8, § 46.

[2] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. XIX (Opera II, 159).—Certum est, quod pietas erga Patriam summa sit, quam aliquis praestare potest.

"there is no intercourse or affinity."[1] "The aim of philosophy is nothing except truth; but that of faith is nothing except obedience [to the laws of society] and piety [social virtues]."[2] "Faith (theology, religion) does not require that dogmas be true, but that they be pious, i. e., such as move the soul to obedience, although among them there be very many which have not the shadow of truth."[3]

What the dogmas are which the average man needs to believe in order to be obedient, and which therefore are to be taught by the established religion, Spinoza has very clearly defined. They are none other than those about whose biblical authenticity and practical utility there is and can be no controversy. As the aim of biblical writers is only to inculcate morality, we must rigidly exclude from the realm of dogma all statements "as to what God may be, whether fire or spirit, or light, or thought, etc."[4] Such questions have no significance for practical life. To religion belong properly only those doctrines, "without a knowledge of which obedience [for the masses] is absolutely impossible."[5] They may be enumerated as follows:

(1) "That God, i. e., a supreme being exists, in the highest degree just and merciful, the exemplar of the true life; for whoever does not know or does

[1] Trac. Theolog.-Polit., Cap. XIV, p. 112.— "—inter Fidem sive Theologiam, et Philosophiam nullum esse commercium nullamve affinitatem."

[2] Ibid. Cf. Cap. XIX, . . . ."illos Dei verbi ministros esse, qui populum ex authoritate summarum potestatum piatatem docent, prout ipsa ex earum decreto publicae utilitati accommodata est."

[3] Op. cit. p. 109.

[4] Trac. Theol.-Polit., p. 111.

[5] Op. cit., p. 110.

not believe that God exists is unable to obey Him, and cannot recognize Him as judge."*

(2) "That he is one; for nobody can doubt that this also is absolutely required in order to produce supreme devotion, admiration, and love to God."[1]

(3) "That he is everywhere present, or that all things are open to his view."[2]

(4) "That he has supreme right and authority over all things, and does nothing under compulsion." "For all are bound to obey him, but he is bound to obey no one."[3]

(5) "That the worship of God consists in justice and charity alone, or in love to one's neighbor."[4]

(6) "That all those, and those alone, who obey God by living this manner of life, are saved; but the rest of mankind, who live under the dominion of their desires, are lost."[5]

(7) "Finally, that God forgives the sins of penitents."[6]

That Spinoza here states a more wholesome and efficacious system of religious doctrine than is often promulgated under the seal of ecclesiastical authority, will be claimed even by many religionists. That it is also sufficiently complete, containing all that is strictly essential to Christianity, if not more, would doubtless be maintained by not a few Christian writers of our day. But this circumstance should not cause us to mistake the position of Spi-

* Trac. Theol.-Polit., p. 110.
[1] Ibid.
[2] Ibid.
[3] Op. cit., p. 111.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid.
[6] Ibid.

noza. The ideas formulated above represent, not Spinoza's own views, but what he finds to be the substance of *biblical doctrine.* He himself, as we have abundantly shown, rejects absolutely this entire point of view, and that not in form merely, but in substance. For him, of course, as well as for the theologian, the foregoing scheme consists of essential postulates of religion. The difference between the two is that the theologian regards them as truth, while Spinoza regards them as fiction,—fiction that is salutary, of course, for those who do not know the truth, but fiction nevertheless.

Nor should Spinoza's position be confounded with that of those religious teachers who claim for much Christian theology nothing more than approximate or symbolical truth. For these writers theology represents, in a certain way and to a certain degree, objective reality, which eludes exact definition; for Spinoza, who thinks he has very definite knowledge of reality, theological conceptions are neither approximations to the truth nor symbols of it, but the utterly mistaken products of the "imagination."

In connection with Spinoza's views of religion in its relation to the state, it is proper to notice what he has to say about oaths. In his opinion, men "will much more beware of committing prejury, if they are commanded to swear by the safety and liberty of the country, and by the supreme council, than if they are commanded to swear by God."[1]

[1] Trac. Polit., Cap. 8, § 48.

## CHAPTER IV.

## HIS TREATMENT OF INDIVIDUAL RELIGIOUS CONCEPTIONS.

### 1. *Miracles.*

Spinoza's view of miracles may be inferred from the general characteristics of his philosophy, and, if it were not for certain enigmatical expressions yet to be noticed, it would scarcely be necessary to cite the language in which he specifically deals with the subject. "As nature preserves a fixed and immutable order," he says, "it most clearly follows that the word miracle is not intelligible except as relative to the opinions of men, and does not signify anything else than an operation, the natural cause of which we are not able to explain by the example of something else that is familiar."[1] "The masses call the unusual operations of nature miracles or works of God, and, partly from piety and partly from a desire to oppose the devotees of natural science, wish to know nothing of natural causes, and to hear only those things of which they are most ignorant and at which therefore they most wonder."[2] "A miracle, whether understood as against nature or as above nature, is a mere absurdity."[3]

### 2. *Revelation.*

The outline of Spinoza's views on this subject incidentally given in the previous chapter requires to

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. VI (Opera II, p. 25).
[2] Opus cit., Cap. VI (Opera II, p. 23).
[3] Opus cit., Cap. VI (Opera II, p. 28).

be filled out with further details. The chief source from which we must learn these is the "Theologico-Political Treatise." This work, as we have seen, possesses certain peculiarities which must be constantly borne in mind. Its fundamental aim is to provide a *modus vivendi* for religion and philosophy; and that chiefly by means of a critical examination of the Scriptures. On the whole, it is written in a conciliatory spirit, and, while thoroughly uncompromising as regards essentials, shows a disposition to adopt, as often as possible, the Scripture or theological point of view. In fact, he professes to draw his conclusions from biblical data alone.[1] But as this irksome and impractical limitation is as often transgressed as it is observed, the work represents different standpoints by turns, often passing abruptly from one to the other, or even blending the two at once. When defined from his own point of view, a given conception will be treated as false; when from that of the Scripture writers, as true. This circumstance, together with Spinoza's general propensity to accommodation, has occasioned the most extraordinary misunderstanding of his fundamental attitude toward religion, especially on the part of those who, without mastering his philosophy, have been satisfied to base their judgments on isolated passages from the "Theologico-Political Treatise."

"Revelation or Prophecy" he defines as "sure knowledge of anything revealed by God to man"; and a prophet as "one who interprets the revelations of God to those who are unable to have a sure knowledge of the things revealed and therefore can

[1] Praefatio (Opera I, 353).

only apprehend them by simple faith."[1] Revelation then is made to the prophet, and he explains it to his less favored fellows, who receive it on his bare authority. The definition of revelation, taken in its broadest sense, would include, as Spinoza observes, all scientific truth, inasmuch as all knowledge, like everything else, is from "God." Consistently the definition of prophet also would include those learned persons who explain to the unlearned the results of scientific studies, though Spinoza does not expressly draw this inference.[2] He is concerned, of course, with revelation and prophets in the theological sense only. The terms are applied to the writings and writers of both Testaments, although his illustrations are generally taken from the Jewish Scriptures.

The substance of his thoughts the prophet may acquire by reading the law of Moses or the utterances of other prophets,[3] and, it would seem, in any way whatever, *except by exact thinking.* Except by exact thinking, we say; for, if the prophet attained his knowledge in this way, he would no longer be a prophet, but a philosopher. In the manner of acquiring his knowledge, therefore, the prophet does not enjoy any advantage over men in general. He may be better and more intelligent than most of his fellows (in fact this much of preëminence we are compelled to ascribe to those prophets whose writings have been included in the canon); but he has no peculiar source or means of knowledge.

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, p. 357).

[2] In a note he even rejects this inference. Cf. Op. cit., note 2.

[3] Opera cit. (Opera II, p. 373).

Spinoza says, to be sure, that such scriptural language as "the Spirit of the Lord was upon him" etc. means that the prophets "possessed a singular and extraordinary power (*virtutem*)," as well as piety; and "that they perceived the mind and thought of God." But it is to be observed that he is here interpreting Scripture by Scripture, and that what he gives is the assumption of Scripture and not his own opinion. Moreover, he is careful to explain in a note that, even according to Scripture, this extraordinary power was not superhuman, i. e., not anything beyond man's ordinary faculties. His own view, here as generally, may be found by translating the language in which he states the assumption of Scripture into terms of his philosophy. It could then be expressed as follows: The piously disposed prophet, when his imagination becomes excited and he prophesies, will declare things in harmony with "justice and charity." And the doctrine of justice and charity, which is the only essential element of biblical theology, is also the teaching of reason. On account of its practical utility and its suitableness to the conditions of human life, i. e., on account of its correspondence with reality, it may be called, in an accommodated sense, the mind and thought of God, though properly speaking, God has no mind and no thoughts.[1]

The distinguishing characteristic of "revelation" *as applied to biblical writers*,—we should not forget that all ideas, true and false, good and bad must

[1] Mr. Pollock ("Spinoza," 2d ed., p. 336) seems to think Spinoza possibly ascribes a peculiar "insight" to the Prophets. I can find no evidence that Spinoza has been guilty of the inconsistency of attributing any insight to the "imagination."

in one sense be "revelations,"—lies not in its substance, but in its form and in the peculiar kind of certainty with which it is accompanied. From the Scriptures it appears that a prophet's certainty was based on one or more of three things: (1) the vividness with which he conceived his thoughts; (2) the presence of a sign, i. e., sensuous manifestation of some kind, which, however, may be shown even from scripture data to have been in every case, except that of Moses, a subjective creation of the imagination, an hallucination;* and (3) the prophet's consciousness of disinterested devotion to what is right and good.[1] Accordingly prophecy always bears the personal characteristics of the prophet. One endowed with a cheerful disposition prophesied "victories, peace and events which make men glad;" if melancholy, "war, massacres and calamities"; if they were countrymen, they had visions of oxen, cows and the like; if soldiers, they saw generals and armies; if courtiers, a royal throne; if they believed that man acted from free choice, they represented God as ignorant of future human actions.[2]

Spinoza's recognition of "the human factor" in prophecy will not be mistaken, of course, for that which goes by this name in traditional theology. According to theology, there is, in addition to the human factor, a divine, supernatural factor; for Spinoza all is human. He admits nothing supernatural; and his explanation of "revelation" must not be understood as inconsistent with his philosophy. *A revelation consists simply of the prophet's own*

* Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, 359).

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. II (Opera I, p. 373).

[2] Opera I, p. 373 and ff.

*thoughts, and is from "God" only in the sense that the prophet himself is God, i. e., a part of nature.*[1] The only thing that distinguishes a so-called revelation from any other undemonstrated opinion is the circumstance that the prophet, because of the vividness of his imagination, becomes subjectively sure of his. But subjective assurance is not objective certainty. In fact, to say that prophecy is a function of the "imagination" is, for Spinoza, the same as to say it is often positively erroneous.[2] We need not be surprised, therefore, to find that the revelation to Solomon concerning the temple contained the mistaken assumption that the ratio between the circumference and the diameter of a circle is exactly as three to one.[3] Moreover, there are, as may be shown from scripture, false prophets as well as true prophets; both alike may be accredited with signs and miracles.[4] The messages even of the false prophet are in one sense "revelations" from "God"; for God sometimes deceives men with false revelations.[5] As prophecy lacks the validity that characterizes clear thinking, its value in any particular case must be measured by its agreement with rational knowledge (including sound moral principles) and with facts. For two of the grounds of the prophet's own certainty constitute the grounds upon which other men are justified in accepting his "revelation," namely, (1) the presence of a sign,

[1] This is the only meaning, when stated in terms of his philosophy, of Spinoza's words, "Deum revelationes captui et opinionibus prophetarum accommodavisse." Opera I, 383.

[2] Opera I, 376.

[3] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. II (Opera I, 377).

[4] Opus cit., Cap. II (Opera I, 373).

[5] Opus cit., Cap. II (Opera I, p. 372).

and (2) the piety of the prophet, or rather, as he now puts it, the soundness of his doctrine.[1] But the sign in this case must be understood as a "true" sign, i. e., as the circumstance that the revelation turns out to be true.[2] Hence the "pious and elect" will never be misled,[3] at least as regards what is essential (practical morality); for rightmindedness, we may suppose, will instinctively revolt against whatever is morally unsound. "Prophecy never rendered the prophets wiser, but left them in their previous opinions."[4] "They taught nothing special about the divine attributes, and held quite vulgar notions about God."[5]

On account of the conciliatory aim of the "Theologico-Political Treatise" and Spinoza's oft-expressed wish to interpret Scripture by Scripture, his use of language in an accommodated sense in this work is occasionally so extraordinary that he seems expressly to contradict the views we have just defined. It is to be regretted that eminent writers on philosophy, sacrificing the scientific spirit to caste feeling, prejudice, mistaken "politeness," "good taste," or what not, have arbitrarily minimized or ignored Spinoza's accommodation, and have felt obliged to take these contradictions seriously. One of the passages which have been pronounced enigmatical is the following:

"If we go through the sacred books, we shall see that all things which God revealed to the prophets were re-

[1] Opus cit., Cap. XV (Opera II, p. 118).—Signo et Doctrina.
[2] Opus cit., Cap. II (Opera I, p. 373).
[3] Opus cit., Cap. II (Opera I, p. 372).
[4] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. II (Opera I, p. 376).
[5] Ibid.

vealed to them either by words, or by appearances (*figuris*), or by words and appearances together. But the words, and also the appearances, were either (1) true and outside the imagination of the prophet who heard or saw them, or (2) imaginary, because the imagination of the prophet was so disposed by watching that he clearly seemed to hear words or to see something. With a real voice God revealed to Moses the laws which he wished to be prescribed for the Hebrews, as appears from Ex. XXV, 22, where God says, 'And there I will meet with thee, and I will speak with thee from that part of the mercy seat which is between the two cherubim.' Which shows indeed that God employed some sort of real voice; for Moses found God ready to speak to him whenever he (Moses) desired."[1]

In close connection with this passage occurs another of similar tenor:

"In the opinion of some Jews the words of the Decalogue were not pronounced by God, but the Israelites heard only a noise, but no articulate words, and during its continuance apprehended the laws of the Decalogue with their minds only. And this I also once suspected; for I saw that the words of the Decalogue in Exodus vary from those in Deuteronomy; from which it seems to follow (since God spoke but once) that the Decalogue did not mean to teach the very words of God, but only his meaning. But unless we would do violence to Scripture, it must be granted without reservation that the Israelites heard a real voice; for Scripture (Deut. V, 4) says expressly, "God spake with you face to face, etc."[2]

In these passages, contrary to the whole tenor of his philosophy and to the emphatic repudiation of miracles, Spinoza seems to recognize the reality of miraculous revelations. But that the apparent contradiction is to be explained by his accommodation to

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, p. 359).
[2] Ibid. (Opera p. 360.)

a standpoint not his own is rendered unquestionable in this case by Spinoza's express warning in the chapter on miracles:

"Before finishing this chapter, I wish to give notice that in regard to miracles I have proceeded according to a different method from that employed in speaking of prophecy. Of prophecy I have affirmed nothing except what I have been able to conclude from grounds revealed in the Holy Scriptures, but here I have deduced the chief points from the principles known only by the natural light of reason."[1]

This is tantamount to saying that, when treating of prophecy, he endeavored to ascertain what the Bible really teaches on this subject, and accommodated himself to the theological point of view; but, when treating of miracles, he spoke from the standpoint of reason (his own standpoint), and stated what he himself conceived to be the truth.

With reference to the means (other than the natural light of reason) by which God reveals things to men, Spinoza says: "Whatever can be said concerning these must be concluded from Scripture. For what can we say about things exceeding the limitations of our mind, except that which is told to us by the mouths or pens of the prophets themselves? And since today, so far as I know, we have no prophets, there remains for us no alternative but to examine the books left to us by the prophets of old."[2] What

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap VI (Opera II, p. 35). In view of this explicit warning that Spinoza's language concerning prophecy does not always express his own views, I am unable to understand the detail and caution with which Mr. Pollock brings himself to concede that "It is extremely difficult to believe that this [the real voice] really commended itself to Spinoza." ("Spinoza," 2d Ed., p. 335.)

[2] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, p. 358).

he meant by this is not clear. Probably it was only his way of saying that, in order to determine what prophecy assumes to be, we have no other way at the present time than to study the Scriptures. But however difficult it may be to understand what he did mean, if anything, it is not difficult, in the light of his total thought, to understand what he did *not* mean. It is certain he did not mean to recognize a supernatural revelation. In this connection, it is well to remember the warning of Ludwig Meyer, Spinoza's confidant, in the preface of the "Metaphysical Thoughts," that when Spinoza says "This or that is beyond the reach of the human mind," he is not speaking "according to his own way of thinking."[1]

When Spinoza professes not to know by what particular "laws of nature" the prophets perceived through words and sensuous forms, "whether real or imaginary," "the revelations of God,"[2] he probably means he will not undertake to determine what special conditions existed among the Hebrews that gave rise to the "prophetic" exercise of the imagination there, but not elsewhere; or possibly, that he will not undertake, by analysis of the imagination, to show how it happened, in the case of the prophets, generally to hit upon ethical truth.

As Spinoza does not concede to revelation as such any certainty that may be depended on, it would seem hard for him to justify obedience to it. He deals with the difficulty in a passage that is worth quoting at length:

[1] Renati Des Cartes Prin. Phil., Praefatio. Opera III, p. 112.

[2] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, p. 369).

"But since the fundamental assumption of theology, that men may be saved by obedience alone, cannot be demonstrated by reason, whether it be true or false, the objection may be raised, Why, then, do we believe it? If we accept it blindly without the warrant of reason, we act foolishly, senselessly. But if, on the other hand, we maintain that this basal assumption is demonstrable by reason, theology will become a part of philosophy, and will be inseparable therefrom. To this I reply that I maintain without qualification that this fundamental dogma of theology cannot be discovered by the natural light of reason, or at least that no one has ever succeeded in proving it, and therefore that revelation has been in the highest degree necessary; but nevertheless we may so use our judgment as to accept with moral certainty at least the revelation when once it has appeared (*id jam revelatum*). With moral certainty, I say; for we may not expect to be more certain in regard to it than were the prophets themselves to whom it was first revealed, whose certainty was nothing more than moral, as we have shown. . . .

For this reason alone we are bound to believe in the Scriptures, that is in the prophets themselves, namely, because their doctrine is sound and is confirmed by signs. For since we see that the prophets commend above all things justice and charity, and aim at nothing else, we conclude that they taught with no deceit, but with conviction, the doctrine that men may become blessed through obedience and faith; and since further they confirmed their teachings with signs, we are persuaded they did not speak at random and did not rave (*delirare*) when they prophesied. In this belief we are still further strengthened when we observe that they taught nothing in morals which does not fully agree with reason; for it is not by chance that the word of God in the Prophets harmonizes completely with the word of God that speaks within us. And these things, I say, we conclude from the Scriptures as certainly as did the Jews formerly from the living voice of the Prophets. For we have shown above that Scripture, as regards doctrine and the principal narratives, has come to our hands unfalsified. Where-

fore the above-mentioned fundamental assumption of theology and Scripture, although it cannot be proved by a mathematical demonstration, may nevertheless be accepted with sound judgment. It would be folly to refuse merely for this reason to accept what is confirmed by the testimony of so many Prophets, and brings great consolation to those who are not very strong in understanding, and is of much advantage to the state, and which may be believed with absolutely no risk or hurt. . . .

Now before passing on to speak of other things I wish expressly to give notice (as indeed I have already done) that I hold the utility and necessity of the Holy Scriptures, or Revelation, to be very great. For since we are not able to perceive by the natural light of reason that simple obedience is a way of salvation, but are taught by Revelation alone that, by the singular grace of God, this happens; it follows that the Scriptures have brought very great consolation to mortals. Absolutely all men can obey, and there are only extremely few, compared with the whole human race, who acquire the habit of virtue by the guidance of reason: and so, if we did not have this testimony of the Scriptures, we should doubt of the salvation of nearly all men."[1]

This remarkable passage, apparently contradicting not only what Spinoza has been at great pains to establish elsewhere in this same work, but also the whole trend and spirit of his philosophy, has been thought to present difficulties of sufficient magnitude to raise the question whether after all Spinoza did not accept, in some degree or in some sense, a supernatural revelation. It has been treated as representing "an unexplained gap between the rationalizing criticism of the 'Theologico-Political Treatise,' which goes a long way, but refuses to go all lengths, and the thorough-going speculation of the

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. XV (Opera II, pp. 117-120).

'Ethics.' " At the same time it is admitted that "difference of dates will not account for it, since we know that Spinoza's philosophy was matured long before the 'Theologico-Political Treatise' was published."[1] And again it is said, "The words are express and even emphatic; and we have no right to sacrifice Spinoza's good faith to the dogma of his rigid consistency, which has arisen from attaching exaggerated importance to the geometrical form used in the 'Ethics.' "[2]

This position we can but regard as unscientific in spirit and mistaken in fact. It is unscientific in spirit, because the reference to Spinoza's good faith shows a disposition to determine the meaning and character of Spinoza's writings by applying as a test an arbitrary conception of Spinoza's personality, instead of examining without prepossessions the writings themselves. Of Spinoza's personality we can, in fact, have very little certain knowledge before we have studied what and how he has written.

We would not seem to admit, however, that to recognize Spinoza's frequent use of language in an accommodated sense is to impeach his "good faith." So seriously it need not be taken. Spinoza sincerely believed that all that is of any value in religion,—its ethical content,—could be established as necessary truth by an atheistic philosophy; or, what amounts to the same thing, that his atheistic philosophy could be stated in terms of religion with sufficient success to convince the philosophical mind that *for practical life* they have the same value. At the same time he hoped, by making this clear, to disarm belli-

[1] Sir F. Pollock, "Spinoza," etc., 2d Ed., p. 339.
[2] Sir F. Pollock, Opus cit., p. 338.

cose theologians, or at least to put them at a serious disadvantage. In order effectually to attain this secondary end, he sometimes (perhaps influenced by the example of certain Jewish commentators) carried his accommodation to a length that renders his language difficult to translate completely into terms of his philosophy. In so far as this is true, it is impossible, of course, to acquit Spinoza of the charge of sometimes saying what he does not mean.[1] Every fair-minded student of his writings must frankly acknowledge as much. But a part of this extreme accommodation is doubtless to be understood as a sort of quiet irony, and the rest, in view of Spinoza's environment, would better not be called by so harsh a name as bad faith. It is rather excessive tact.

As to the "dogma of rigid consistency," we would observe that there are two senses in which consistency as applied to Spinoza may be understood; in one sense it is true, and in another sense it is mistaken. If it means that his *argumentation* is exceptionally free from logical contradictions, it is a mere prejudice given currency by superficial students of his writings. Probably no other great philosopher has committed so many serious mistakes of logic, or has held so many conceptions that are mutually incompatible. There is one sense, however, in which Spinoza is an example of almost, perhaps quite, unprecedented consistency: his thinking moves on a plane far above emotional interests, deference to

[1] In the light of Spinoza's doctrine of the "imagination," what else can be said of such language as this: "Since the Prophets perceived revelations by the aid of the imagination, they were doubtless able to perceive many things lying beyond the boundaries of reason."—Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, p. 370).

authority, and all other extra-logical considerations. He is disposed to view all things in the dry light of reason, and hence to follow his premises directly to their ultimate consequences, however radical and ruthless these consequences may appear. He has no patience with half-measures. Now it is Spinoza's consistency in this sense, his thoroughness, that is questioned in the case before us.

And not only this. In view of the fact that the "Ethics" and the "Theologico-Political Treatise" are contemporaneous products of his mind, it is especially the consistency of his fundamental *personal attitude* that is questioned; for it is assumed that at the same stage in his development he was the uncompromising champion of Naturalism and the defender of Supernaturalism, contending along with the theologians for the necessity of "revelation" and trying to prove its authority. Thus, to ignore Spinoza's accommodation and to take at face value his language in the passage quoted, would require us to suppose that he could assume two fundamental attitudes at the same time, that he could simultaneously face both east and west. As this is impossible, we are compelled to assume that one attitude was real and the other assumed. That his real one is represented by the "Ethics," we can not doubt. It is therefore the duty of interpretation to bring this passage, if possible, into harmony with Naturalism. The problem before us is simply that of translating his language into terms of his philosophy.

We notice first some single expressions. When Spinoza mentions "signs" as one of the grounds upon which our acceptance of "revelation" is justified, he evidently means, not signs in general (for,

as he observes in this connection, false prophets confirmed their messages with signs and wonders) but "true" signs, i. e., verifiable signs. And the only signs he mentions as not being the common possession of both false and true prophets are true *predictions.*[1] For Spinoza, therefore, the only signs possessing any credential value are predictions of events that come to pass. But these predictions may not be regarded as based on either miraculous foresight or on such rational insight as carries with it absolute certainty. Presumably they are based on a knowledge of life gained through practical experience, and hence, in so far as they turn out to be true, they are proof, though only "moral," probable proof, that the prophet is a trustworthy guide in matters of practical life. It is consistent with this that what the "signs" are said to prove is only that the prophets did not speak "at random" and did not "rave" when they prophesied. However liable the uncritical reader may be to find in Spinoza's "signs" a meaning harmonizing with traditional theology, the meaning for Spinoza turns out, when sifted, to be nothing more than what we have defined. The *signum et doctrina*, therefore, which he designates as the grounds upon which men of his generation may accept the authority of Scripture writers are only (1) evidence of practical wisdom, and (2) soundness of moral teachings.

The expression "word of God speaking in us," it is hardly necessary to observe, should not be mistaken for an innate moral or "spiritual" sense, nor for the "witness of the Spirit," nor for anything of

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. VI and XV (Opera, Vol. II, pp. 28 and 118).

this kind. For Spinoza it means the human reason and the moral principles which reason can show to be necessary truths.

Taking now the whole passage together, and translating it into terms of Spinoza's philosophy, his thought may be freely expressed as follows: That "obedience" by faith to precepts promulgated on authority brings salvation (happiness and well-being), is the assumption of every prophet and of "revealed religion" as a whole. But this assumption cannot be proved by reason, i.e., it is not necessarily true; for it cannot be admitted as universally valid. If followed unconditionally, it would bind us blindly to obey the first man claiming authority, and would therefore bring us to perdition, more frequently than to salvation. The only universally safe and valid principle is to commit ourselves to the guidance of reason, i. e., to adopt those maxims which are necessary truth. But when the assumption that faith and obedience lead to happiness and well-being is made by the Scriptures, it is not as a universal, but as a particular, proposition. What is meant is obedience by faith to those particular scriptures which the moral consciousness of the race has selected from among others and has included in the canon. In this case the assumption is one which we may allow to pass, (1) because we see in the Scriptures evidence that the writers were men of practical wisdom, and (2) because their teaching, "justice and charity," is in harmony with that of reason. Although these arguments are not mathematical demonstrations, they are quite sufficient (1) to justify in accepting and obeying the Scriptures those who cannot see moral principles as neces-

sary truths, and (2) to obligate philosophers to support religion for the benefit of such persons; especially as faith in the Bible affords great comfort to many, and as obedience to its general moral teaching does not involve risks and is even positively advantageous to the state. It would indeed be a great misfortune, if all men were required to discover moral truths each for himself; for, as comparatively few possess the power of exact and independent thinking, the majority of men would go astray.

This is the utmost that Spinoza's language could have meant for him. That for many readers it would probably mean more, he must have foreseen.

We are now in a position to estimate correctly Spinoza's words in a letter to Blyenbergh, where he professes to believe "all things which God has revealed to the Prophets," and that the Prophets were "intimate confidents and trusted ambassadors of God."[1] The thought in his own mind which he chose thus to clothe, (or to mask), in theological phraseology, was simply this: "I believe the practice of 'justice and charity' to be of the highest advantage to men."

Spinoza's "Theologico-Political Treatise," from which we have had occasion to quote so copiously in connection with this subject, contains many seed-thoughts which have borne fruit in the field of theology. It is a remarkable case of an atheist's making valuable contributions to divinity. But here is not the place for a detailed account of his influence on theology. It is proper only to point out more explicity how Spinoza's doctrine of "revelation" is related to any religious doctrine of the same.

[1] Epis. 21 (olim 34); Opera II, pp. 281-2.

With the traditional theological conception of revelation as a supernatural communication of truth otherwise inaccessible to human knowledge, Spinoza's teaching has of course nothing at all in common. What he finds to be the essential part of "revelation," its ethical content, is better discovered by reason, and was discovered by the sacred writers only by a sort of happy conjecture.

Liberal religionists who do not recognize the special authority of any one religion sometimes permit themselves to apply the term "revelation" to the system of "truth" which the general religious consciousness, through experience under the corrective influence of rational criticism, has wrought out for itself in the course of human history. Such writers are in a measure consistent, inasmuch as the doctrines in question are assumed to have been learned under Divine Providence as the teacher of the race. But even this sort of revelation is separated *toto coelo* from Spinoza's by its metaphysical setting.

It has both a different content and a different source. Spinoza's contains no metaphysical elements of recognized validity, its only valuable part consisting of practical moral precepts; according to liberal religionists the common metaphysical postulates of religion embodied in that which they call revelation are valid. Spinoza traces his "revelation" back through the fallible operations of the inferior faculties of the human mind to a blind and insensible necessity; liberal religionists conceive their revelation as the acquisition of the human soul through its worthiest organs under the guidance of a living, personal Spirit.

In one important particular Spinoza's biblical criticism differs from all that of the present day, whether conservative or radical; it takes no account of historical development in either religion or morals. Nowadays it has become the universal mental habit to view all particular facts as moments in a process of development. On this account even conservative biblical critics may unhesitatingly accept many of Spinoza's conclusions in regard to particular points, frankly recognizing the existence of biblical errors, and still contend that the Bible as a whole contains a *bona fide* divine revelation. For Spinoza who never thought of historical development, this would have been impossible, even if his metaphysics had permitted.

### 3. *Jesus Christ.*

The doctrines held by orthodox Christianity concerning Jesus, Spinoza cannot of course accept. In one place, to be sure, he says he neither affirms nor denies them, since he is unable to understand them.[1] But this statement, which occurs in the "Theologico-Political Treatise," means only that he did not wish in that place to express himself definitely on the subject. His mind is revealed more fully in a letter to Oldenburg, where he says the churches which teach that in Jesus "God assumed human nature" "seem to speak no less absurdly than he who should say that a circle may put on the nature of a square."[2] As might be anticipated, therefore, he regarded Jesus as a mere man. The supernatural factors in Christ's life as related in the New Testa-

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit., Cap. I (Opera I, p. 363).
[2] Epis. 73 (olim 21).

ment are explained away or allegorized. What he says of the resurrection is of special interest on account of its substantial agreement with the explanations of certain more modern critics. He expresses himself as follows:

"My opinion on miracles I have sufficiently explained in the 'Theologico-Political Treatise.' Here I add only this: if you note these circumstances, namely that Christ appeared neither to the Elders, nor to Pilate, nor to any of the unbelievers, but only to the saints; that God has neither right hand nor left hand and is not in any one place, but is in essence present everywhere, that matter is everywhere the same, that God does not manifest himself in a fancied space outside the world, and finally that the human frame is restrained within due bounds by the weight of the air alone, you will easily see that this appearance of Christ was not unlike that by which God appeared to Abraham when the latter saw men whom he invited to dine with him. But, you will say, all the Apostles surely believed that Christ rose from the dead and really ascended into heaven; which I do not deny. For Abraham also believed that God had dined with him, and all the Israelites believed that God, enveloped in fire, descended from heaven to Mount Sinai and directly spoke to them; whereas these apparitions or revelations, and many others like them, were accommodated to the understanding and opinions of those men to whom God willed to reveal thereby his mind. I conclude therefore that the resurrection of Christ from the dead was in fact spiritual, revealed to the faithful alone, and to them according to their understanding; amounting to this, that Christ was endowed with eternity and rose from the dead ('dead' I use in the sense in which Christ used the word when he said, 'Let the dead bury their dead'), in that he gave in his life and death an example of singular holiness; and he raises his disciples from the dead in so far as they follow the example of his life and death."[1]

[1] Epis. 75 (olim 23).

From this it is sufficiently clear that, in Spinoza's opinion, Christ's resurrection was an illusion, but that for the edification of believers it may with propriety be treated allegorically. Observe that, according to Spinoza, Christ's real resurrection is nothing else than his "singular holiness." When encountering such language as "to whom God willed to reveal His mind," unsuspecting readers,—they will pardon our frequent repetition of the warning—should beware lest they understand more than Spinoza means. It is a case of accommodation to the theological point of view. It must not be forgotten that for Spinoza himself there exists no divine "will" and no divine "mind," and hence no "God" either, the word signifying in his vocabulary nothing more than impersonal thought and extension.

But if Spinoza could not accept any of the supernaturalism with which the Christian church has always colored its conception of Christ, he was able nevertheless to speak of Him in words of high appreciation. Jesus was, in any view, so unique and commanding a personality that all respectable writers, of whatever school of thought, have unhesitatingly accorded him sincere and profound respect. Spinoza was too sane and too fair-minded a man to be able to do less. In fact his interest in ethical truth, if nothing else, could not permit him to be indifferent to a teacher whose moral influence has been an important factor in human history. From the language he employs in speaking of him, it is apparent that to Spinoza's own mind there was always present the distinction, so familiar nowadays, between the ecclesiastical and the historic Christ. Just where, in regard to Christ's moral eminence, he drew the

line that separates fact from idealization, it is impossible to determine; for, in his references to him, there is always an uncertain amount of accommodation to Christian thought and feeling. As throwing some light on this question, we quote from the "Theologico-Political Treatise" the following tangled paragraphs, which contain Spinoza's fullest account of Christ, italicizing the expressions that require special scrutiny:

"In the Holy Scriptures I find no other means [than words and appearances] by which God has communicated with men; and hence, as we have shown above, no others are to be invented or admitted. And although we clearly understand that God can communicate with us immediately, for without any physical means he communicates his essence to our minds [i. e., reality's fundamental characters, thought and extension, are contained in our ordinary knowledge]; yet that any man should simply by his mind *perceive things not contained in the first principles of our knowledge and not deducible therefrom*, his mind would necessarily have to be superior, far surpassing human intelligence. Wherefore I do not believe that any one else has attained to such perfection above others except Christ, to whom *God's ordinances* which lead men to salvation were revealed, not by words and visions, but immediately: so that God manifested himself to the Apostles by the mind of Christ, as he did formerly to Moses by means of a voice in the air. So the voice of Christ, like that which Moses heard, may be called the voice of God. And in this sense we may also say that the wisdom of God, i. e., *superhuman wisdom*, assumed human nature in Christ; and that Christ was the way of salvation. . . . . But here I must give warning that those things which certain churches assert concerning Christ I neither affirm nor deny; for I freely confess that I do not understand them. *What I have just affirmed, I gather from the Scriptures themselves.* For I do not read anywhere that God appeared to Christ or spoke to him,

but that by Christ God was revealed to the Apostles, that Christ is the way of salvation, and finally that the old law was delivered through angels, and not immediately by God. Wherefore, if Moses spoke face to face with God, as a man to his fellow (that is, by means of two bodies), Christ communicated with God mind to mind."[1]

To this ought to be added a passage taken from another chapter of the same work:

"Therefore he [Moses] perceived all these things, not as eternal truths, but, as precepts and ordinances, and prescribed them as laws of God; and hence it happened that he imagined God as a ruler, as a legislator, as a king, as merciful, as just, etc., notwithstanding that all these are only predicates of human nature, and are absolutely foreign to the divine nature. But this, I say, is to be affirmed only in regard to the Prophets, who laid down laws in the name of God, and not in regard to Christ; for in regard to Christ, although he too seems to have laid down laws in the name of God, it is to be supposed that *he perceived things truly and adequately:* for Christ was not so much a prophet as the very mouth of God; since, as we showed in chapter I., God revealed certain things to mankind through the mind of Christ, as he did previously through angels, i. e., through a created voice, visions, etc. Wherefore to hold that God accommodated his revelations to the opinions of Christ would be just as unreasonable as to say that formerly, in order to communicate to the Prophets the things to be revealed, God accommodated his revelations to the opinions of angels, i. e., of a created voice and of visions. It would be impossible to say anything more absurd than this; especially as Christ was sent to teach, not the Jews only, but the whole human race; and so it was not sufficient that he should possess a mind accommodated to the opinions of the Jews only, but it was necessary that he should have one accommodated to the universal opinions and norms of mankind, i. e., to the notions

[1] Trac. Theol.-Polit. Cap. I (Opera I, pp. 362-3).

that are common to all and are true.[1] And indeed from the circumstance, that God revealed himself immediately to Christ, or to Christ's mind, and not, as he did to the Prophets, through words and appearances, we can infer nothing else than that Christ truly perceived or understood the things revealed; for it is when a thing is perceived by the mind alone, without outward words and images, that it is understood. Christ, then, perceived truly and adequately the matters revealed, and *if he ever prescribed them as laws, he did so on account of the ignorance and pertinacity of the people. He thus acted the part of God, inasmuch as he accommodated himself to the understanding of the people*, and hence, although speaking somewhat more clearly than the Prophets, he very often taught obscurely and in parables the matters revealed; especially when addressing those to whom it was not yet given to understand the Kingdom of Heaven. But to those to whom it was given to know the mysteries of heaven, he doubtless taught his doctrines as eternal truths, and did not prescribe them as laws."[2]

That both these passages contain a considerable element of accommodation is apparent at a glance, but that this element is so large as to render them of little value for determining Spinoza's real estimate of Christ, will perhaps not be recognized at once. In order to interpret them correctly it must be remembered that, although the second passage occurs in the chapter on miracles, in both passages the general subject under consideration is revelation. But we have seen that Spinoza repeatedly warns us that, when treating this subject, he occupies the standpoint of the Scripture writers themselves. If there were any doubt about his having followed the general rule in this particular case, it would be removed by his express avowal in the first paragraph quoted:

[1] "Notionibus communibus et veris." See page 80 seq.

[2] Trac. Theol.-Polit. Cap. 4 (Opera II, p. 7).

"What I have just affirmed, I gather from the Scriptures themselves" etc. When he speaks of a mind that can "perceive things not contained in the first principles of our knowledge, and not deducible therefrom," he supposes a case which does not exist for him, as anyone even superficially acquainted with Spinoza's philosophy must recognize. "God's ordinances that lead men to salvation", which are said to be "immediately" apprehended by Christ, are for Spinoza nothing else than Christ's ethical doctrines (justice and charity); but these, according to Spinoza, can be deduced with mathematical certainty by ordinary human reason from "the first principles of our knowledge." It is clear therefore that he himself does not credit Christ with any supernatural wisdom. The extraordinary mind of Christ, it will be observed, stands on precisely the same footing with the "real voice" that spoke to Moses. For Spinoza both are fictions. Hence the remark that no one except Christ has attained to intelligence surpassing man's, is equivalent to: No one has been endowed with the exceptional kind of cognition *which the Scriptures attribute to Christ.*

What Spinoza really says is that the biblical writers attribute to Christ (1) a pre-eminence over the Prophets which could consistently be ascribed only to one who possesses "adequate knowledge," and (2) "superhuman" faculties as the organs of his knowledge. What Spinoza's own view is, he does not say. But, for the reasons already stated, we know, what would be sufficiently clear on other grounds that he himself did not suppose Christ to be endowed with "superhuman" faculties, or to know matters inaccessible to common human intelli-

gence. As to "adequate" knowledge, it is impossible to determine with certainty whether Spinoza supposed Christ to possess it, or not. But from his apparent readiness to assert (what no one else, I imagine, would concede) that Christ's accommodation to the "ignorance and pertinacity" of the people is illustrated not only by his use of parables but by his adoption of a theistic frame-work for his doctrines, it seems probable that Spinoza did regard the historic Jesus as a man of adequate knowledge and of speculative genius. But if he supposed that Christ, although perceiving moral principles as necessary truths, was nevertheless a *bona fide* theist, Spinoza must have been unable to regard him as a fully emancipated mind. In that case Spinoza's human ideal would have forbidden his awarding to Christ the highest place among mortals. That place could belong only to those elect children of light who reject all purely religious conceptions as crude anthropomorphisms differing from one another only in degree of crudeness.[1]

Certain expressions in the passages quoted above might at first reading suggest that Spinoza credited Christ with that gift of insight, which he calls *scientia intuitiva*. But it will be observed that even what the Scriptures attribute to Christ is not what Spinoza can call intuition; for this he expressly describes as proceeding from "the first principles of our knowledge." And when Christ's knowledge is called "immediate," Spinoza means only that it was not mediated by signs and visions; he does not mean that it was knowledge above process.

[1] The men whom Spinoza admired were such as Epicurus, Democritus, etc. Vide Opera II, 378.

The fact is, Spinoza has nowhere given a frank account of his opinion of Jesus. It may be that he chose not to reveal it. Possibly it was not very clearly defined in his own mind except as regards its negative determinations; that is to say, he was sure that Christ was nothing more than a man, and, while recognizing him as an eminent moral teacher, he may not have been interested to determine affirmatively just what type of mind he represented, perhaps considering the historical data insufficient for a satisfactory answer to this question.

### 4. *Sin.*

In its proper signification 'sin' is a religious term and a religious term only. It means the transgression of the assumed will of a postulated divine person. As sometimes employed, however, it denotes any unrighteousness, without implying an immediate reference to Deity. Spinoza uses the word in both ways. In the chapter on "Church and State" we had occasion to note that according to him no unrighteousness can exist outside of civil society, i. e., there can be no *wrong* conduct other than the transgression of the laws of society; although of course there may be, outside of society, conduct that is *unwise*, for the agent and *harmful* to others. To what was said in that place we may here add his express assertion that "in a state of nature sin [unrighteousness in general] is inconceivable."[1] But if unrighteousness in general has no meaning except in relation to the laws of society, there can be no such thing as sin in the sense of a transgression of

[1] Eth. IV, 37, schol. 2.—Atque adeo in statu naturali peccatum concipi nequit.

divine will. And this is of course only the plain and inevitable consequence of Spinoza's philosophy. When man's being and activity are absolutely determined by the immutable laws of the "divine" nature, he possesses no ability to transgress; and when "God" is deprived of will and of all ethical qualities, there is moreover nothing to "sin" against.

Already in the "Short Treatise" sin is regarded as only an *ens rationis* which corresponds to no reality, the conception arising from the comparison of a Peter or Paul with an abstract idea of man in general. In truth the individual is not obliged, since he is not able, to conform to anything but his own particular nature.* What he can be, he is; and what he is not, he cannot be. This thought is repeated later in his correspondence with Blyenbergh: "For my part, I cannot concede that sins and evil are anything positive, much less that anything is or happens contrary to the will of God. On the contrary, I not only say that sins are nothing positive, but even assert that, except improperly and humanly, we cannot speak of sinning against God."[1] Accepting the obvious consequences of these premises, he adds: "It is indeed true that the wicked express in their own way the will of God."[2] When considered in themselves, i. e., rightly considered, they are also equally perfect with the good; for each fills out his full measure of being. But if by perfection you mean well-being or "blessedness," they are of course incomparably less perfect than the good.[3] It is

* Opera III, 31.—"Wy besluyten dan te zezzen," etc.

[1] Epis. 19 (olim 32) Opera II, p. 253.

[2] Ibid., p. 255.

[3] Epis. 23 (olim 34) Opera II, p. 290.

absurd however to ask whether good works are more acceptable to God than crime. Neither are 'acceptable' to him, the word itself being inapplicable to God* (for the reason, no doubt, that it implies ethical distinctions and self-consciousness).

The conception of sin as privation or negation he illustrates at length, and employs it to evade Blyenbergh's objection that his doctrines make God the cause of sin. He asserts that sin is simply the name we give to the short-coming of an individual when compared with what we expect from abstract 'man'; and when we say some one sins, we assume that his nature possesses potentially the same content as our abstract idea and that we have a right to require him to act in harmony with that idea;[1] whereas he in fact possesses no attributes or powers beyond those inhering in his individual nature at any given point of time. Sin therefore is not a real thing. Hence it requires no cause and in fact has none. It is absurd then to speak of God as its cause.[2] Nero's matricide, for instance, was not sin in so far as it included anything positive, i. e., in so far as it consisted of intention and act; but only in so far as it exhibited ingratitude, mercilessness, and disobedience. But these words denote wickedness in Nero only because we judge him by a standard that lies

* Ibid., p. 289.

[1] Nominalism of course constitutes the basis of Spinoza's argument here. But that he is not, as is generally assumed, a consistent nominalist, we have pointed out in another place. See page 150. In other connections of his thought, as Martineau has observed, he "unconsciously retains the realism he professes to renounce." Cf. also Prof. Fullerton ("The Philos. of Spinoza") who rightly I think, makes "Spinoza's realism the key to his reasonings in the 'Ethics.'"

[2] Epis. 19 (olim 32) and 21 (olim 34).

outside his own nature and imagine he could have been something else than himself and have done otherwise than he did. The sin is simply our way of thinking, an *ens rationis*. Being nothing real, it did not have God or anything else for its cause. The real elements in the fact are the intention and the act, and of these God was indeed the cause.[1]

Blyenbergh had here, as in general, spoken from the standpoint of indeterminism and religion, and from that standpoint his objections were quite valid. Even his contention that Spinoza's doctrine makes men resemble stocks and stones is not, in the sense in which it is meant, absurd; for Spinoza himself has compared man's activity to that of a moving stone.[2] While retaining a good deal of religious phraseology, Spinoza argues really from the standpoint of atheism; and it is not surprising that Blyenbergh, who had not seen the "Ethics," was somewhat puzzled.

### 5. *Repentance.*

Twinges of conscience (*knaging*), says he in the "Short Treatise," arise from our doing something about the rightness of which we afterward fall into doubt; and penitence results from having done something which we recognize to be wrong, that is, according to Spinoza's thought, to be disadvantageous or injurious to us. Both are hurtful and bad, since they are kinds of pain, (*droefheid*), and all pain is a sign of diminishing power and well-being. Instead of penitence, therefore, he would substitute a passionless change of conduct determined by the

[1] Epis. 23 (olim 36), Opera II, p. 288.
[2] Epis. 58 (olim 62), Opera II, p. 382.

knowledge of our previous folly.[1] With this, what he has to say on the same subject in the "Ethics" does not disagree, although he there defines penitence as "sadness attended by the idea of oneself as cause,"[2] remarking incidentally, that both penitence and self-complacency are very vehement affects because men believe themselves to be free.

Rational religion must agree with Spinoza in recognizing change of conduct as the only element of repentance that is of absolute importance; but it is to be noted that Spinoza's account of the matter involves no reference to "God" in any sense. Hence, while it may properly be called an *ethical* doctrine, there is no justification for calling it a *religious* doctrine.

### 6. *Salvation.*

It has already appeared with sufficient clearness that, from the standpoint of Spinoza's philosophy, salvation is "the intellectual love of God"; or, as an eminent writer[3] has paraphrased it, "acquiescence in the order of nature, with the delight in knowledge thereby engendered, and living a righteous life at the bidding of reason." This is the kind of salvation to which, according to Spinoza, the consistent thinker, the philosopher, must necessarily attain. But when he says that through obedience salvation is possible also for unreflective people, it is evident that the term is not to be understood in quite the same sense as before. The cognitive factor must be eliminated. Neither the delight in knowledge nor

[1] Korte Verhandeling II, Cap. 10.

[2] Eth. III, 51, schol. Cf. III. 30, schol., where "causae externae" evidently should be "causae internae."

[3] Mr. Pollock Op. cit. 2nd ed., p. 344.

the guidance of reason can be elements in the salvation attainable by the unenlightened. Their peculiar salvation Spinoza has nowhere expressly defined, but we may easily discern what it is. This too, is the "love of God," although the phrase stands no longer for a mere cognitive interest in nature, but for obedience to the righteous personal ruler postulated by Christianity, who has made a "revelation" consisting of the moral law. In other words, salvation for the masses consists in living, as a consequence of theistic assumptions, a life of "justice and charity," and in enjoying its natural fruits of peace and security. So far as conduct is concerned, therefore, the practical results of a life according to reason and of a life according to religion are about the same. Both kinds of life are determined by ethical truths, but in one case these are deduced from correct, in the other from entirely false notions of ultimate reality.

### 7. *Providence.*

This is another term belonging to the vocabulary of religion which Spinoza does not hesitate to retain in his non-religious system. In its real meaning it cannot be brought into any kind of relation to his philosophy. It is the word and not the meaning that he adopts, applying it to that in his system which takes the place of providence in religion, namely to necessary, blind causation. Already in the "Short Treatise" he makes causation and providence equivalent, referring to 'God' as in the same sense "the cause and providence"[1] of things. With reference to the scholastic distinction between a general and a special providence, he accordingly speaks as fol-

[1] Korte Verhandeling, I, Cap. 6.

lows: "General providence is that by which everything, in so far as it is a part of the whole nature, is *produced* and *sustained.* Special providence is *the effort* (*poginge*) *which everything makes to preserve its peculiar being*, in so far as it is conceived, not as a part of nature, but as a whole in itself."[1]

For a benevolent divine person without whose knowledge and will nothing takes place, Spinoza's doctrine substitutes an impersonal necessity whose fast embrace extends to the last details of reality. His "providence," therefore, shows only a formal resemblance to the religious doctrine,—it precludes all accidents. A formal resemblance, we say; for in Spinoza's thought the impossibility of accidents does not, as in a religious system, imply security through the oversight of a benevolent person, but only the uniformity of unethical nature. According to him, as we have seen, cosmic activity does not proceed "from the standpoint of the good."[2] His doctrine supplies changeless data for science, it is true; and on this account it is calculated to minister *intellectual* satisfaction; but, inasmuch as it fails to mitigate the merciless aspects of nature and of life by postulating a transcendent world in the light of which they are assumed to be justified, it has no real resemblance to the Christian doctrine of providence. Religiously it possesses the same value as materialistic fatalism; no more and no less.

### 8. *Prayer.*

If Spinoza had not employed this word in theological controversy in such a way as to enable one

[1] Op. cit. I., Cap. 5. The italics are ours.
[2] Eth. I, 33, schol. 2, at the end.

to quote him as a believer in prayer, it would be superfluous to mention the subject in this connection; for prayer can have no justification where all events result from an impersonal necessity. Even in the modified sense of mere articulate resignation or of spiritual communion, it can find no place in Spinoza's system. Hence he takes no notice of it until the question of its legitimacy and value is forced upon him in controversy. Then he says, "I do not deny that prayers are very useful to us; for my intellect is too small to find out all the means which God possesses for leading men to the love of himself, i. e., to salvation."[1] In the light of his philosophy and of what we have learned concerning his treatment of religion in general, this can only mean, of course, (if it means anything) that, as far as he can see, prayer may be a beneficial exercise for the children of the imagination, although for the children of reason it is not only useless but inconsistent.

The value of such language, employed in controversy, may be correctly estimated by comparing it with the attitude Spinoza assumed toward prayer when speaking with trusted friends. What that attitude was is revealed by expressions quoted from Spinoza in a letter addressed to him by his friend Hugo Boxel in 1674—expressions that are indeed so significant that they ought to be sufficient in themselves to settle the question of Spinoza's attitude toward religion. They were not generally known to exist until 1899, when Prof. Freudenthal of Breslau, who had found the original Dutch letter in an old library at Amsterdam, gave it to the public. Previously the letter had been known only in the

[1] Epis. 21 (olim 34). Opera II, p. 279.

Latin translation published with the rest of Spinoza's correspondence; but in this translation the editors had omitted, for reasons that will be intelligible, the particular passage in question. The general subject of correspondence was the reality of spirits and the genuineness of alleged supernatural phenomena. At the conclusion of a letter in which he had ridiculed Boxel's inclination to believe in such things, Spinoza had employed language which Boxel incidentally reproduces in his reply. "At the end of your letter," he writes, "you say that to commend me to God is something you cannot do without laughing."[1]

Philippus van Limborch asserts[2] that he once found himself at a dinner where Spinoza was present, and he observed that, while some were saying grace, Spinoza made certain signs by which he apparently wished to indicate the stupidity of the performance. Spinoza's well-known prudence and considerateness would forbid our believing, even on the word of so trustworthy a witness as Limborch, that he was guilty of any intentional rudeness to those who began the meal with a prayer; but there is nothing discreditable in the supposition that he made signs to

[1] Freudenthal's Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's, p. 198, lines 20-23. The passage appears cancelled in the Dutch original, and, as remarked above, is entirely wanting in the Latin translation. Spinoza's letter from the end of which the sentence quoted by Boxel is taken appears truncated in Spinoza's published correspondence, so that the connection in which the words occurred is unknown. I suppose he refers to the use of a conventional phrase sometimes employed in conclusion committing the friend addressed to the care of Providence.

[2] Cf. a letter of Limborch's published in the appendix to Meinsma's "Spinoza en zijn Kring," p. 14. An extract is given in Freudenthal's "Lebensgeschichte Spinoza's," p. 211.

intimate friends indicating his estimate of it, and that these signs may incidentally have caught the eye of Limborch. Whether the incident was real, or, as has generally been supposed hitherto, imaginary, we are unable to determine with certainty; but, in the light of Boxel's letter, it will scarcely be considered any longer as improbable.

## CHAPTER V.

## SUPPOSED PROFESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS INTEREST.

The question whether Spinoza's philosophy constitutes a religious system is not identical with the question whether he possessed a religious interest. It is conceivable that a thinker might have a genuine religious interest, and nevertheless feel compelled, as a consequence of metaphysical presuppositions, to accept a non-religious or an anti-religious view of the world. That Spinoza's philosophy is not a religious system, but a typical expression of the antithetical world-view, has become sufficiently clear. It remains only to consider the question whether there are adequate grounds for the common assumption that, whatever be the character of his system, he was personally a man of strong religious interest. The final answer to this question, which might have been expected in connection with the "Biographical Sketch," was purposely deferred until after we should become acquainted with the characteristics of Spinoza's thinking; for, although anti-religious tenets may not be conclusive proof of the absence of all religious interest, the mental characteristics revealed in a philosopher's thinking constitute an essential part of the total manifestation of his personality, and must be known in order to determine accurately his relation to religion. That attitude, as it has come to light in the foregoing investigations, has led us to assert that Spinoza's dominant interest was cognitive and that

this was unmixed with anything which may be called the religious interest. We propose here to justify that conclusion more completely.

In any intelligent discussion of this question, the first thing to settle is the meaning of 'religious interest.' We have already shown that there is no warrant for applying the term religion to any attitude toward reality which does not postulate, explicitly or implicitly, a higher personal power, or higher personal powers, behind the sensuous world; and that religion consists in a personal attitude to the assumed power or powers. Religious *interest*, therefore, is an interest in the reality of a world so constituted; or, in other words, it is a psychical condition that requires for its satisfaction the peace, the sense of security, the optimism, the idealism, the filial consciousness, etc., that are involved in such a world-view, and in just the way they are involved in such a world-view. And since interest necessarily issues in a volitional experience, we may describe it in ultimate terms as *a preference for a world peopled with superhuman intelligences or controlled by one supreme intelligence*, these intelligences or this intelligence being conceived as not indifferent to human life. Observe that we do not say it is the acceptance of, but a *preference for*, such a world-view. When we dispel the haze that generally envelops the several expressions, 'religious sentiment,' 'religious feeling,' 'religious spirit,' 'religious interest,' etc., and attempt to put into them some intelligible content, they are seen to have no other construable meaning.

The religious interest in this sense is a child of our complex experience of reality, or of particular

elements in that experience. The consciousness of dependence on objective reality, of which so much has been made by different writers, is perhaps the most important of these elements, although it does not of itself constitute the religious interest. The consciousness of dependence gives rise to the religious interest only when the individual is disposed, often on account of a sense of orphanage, to conceive as a person the power on which he ultimately depends; when, in other words, he revolts at the thought of being ruled by unfeeling, inexorable *things*. Without undertaking to describe all the other elements of experience which may condition the religious interest, it is sufficient for our present purpose to note that conceivably the determining factor may be a perception of the vanity of the ordinary goods of life. But neither is this dissatisfaction, in itself, the religious interest; it is only a favorable condition for its birth when it does not exist, and for its maintenance where it is already found as a result of early education or of unreflective impulse. With the felt inadequacy of the common objects of pursuit a religious interest may, or may not, be associated. Such dissatisfaction might favor a purely ethical, a purely aesthetic, or a purely cognitive interest. Indeed it could co-exist with passive pessimism, or even with a positive antipathy to religion. Here we are concerned only with the circumstance that, in the case supposed, the religious interest is not present unless the dissatisfied spirit craves, among other things, a world controlled by a personal power.

We wish to emphasize the fact that the religious interest has its roots in the emotional nature and is

the expression of personal needs. In how far the personal needs thus expressed are facts which, in a scientific account of the world, would appear as a rational justification of the religious postulates, is a question with which we are not here concerned. Whether religion is based on truth or untruth, it cannot be questioned that the distinctively religious interest is concerned with values, and, can become strong only in a richly emotional nature. In this respect, it is the antithesis of the scientific interest, which is concerned only with facts. The latter may make religion, as well as anything else, an object of reflection, but it does not thereby become the religious interest. Investigations in theology and in the philosophy of religion do not necessarily imply a religious interest, but only a scientific interest in religion. But when the religious interest is strong, it tends, of course, like any other, to subordinate the cognitive activity to its own ends; and its influence is distinctly traceable in the movements and results of a man's thinking. Whether, in a particular case, reflection on religion has been occasioned by a religious interest or by a scientific interest in religion, can be learned only from the way in which the subject is treated.

In Spinoza we have, as all agree, a person in whom the emotional life found little place. Whether we consider it a virtue or a fault, we must recognize the fact that, in his case, feeling was sacrificed to knowledge, heart to intellect. The claims of the emotional nature were allowed neither in his life nor in his system. On this point we would add nothing to what has recently been said by one of his warmest admirers: "He is not a man of feeling. . . . . So

great in him is the power of the intellect, that in his character there appears at times a certain matter-of-fact-ness and coldness, which represses important aesthetic interests and undeniable needs of the heart (*Gemüt*). This accounts for his one-sided judgments on art and religion. . . . . The most beautiful creations of poetry, such as Ariosto's 'Roland,' are for him mere trumpery (*nugae*).''[1] It is evident, therefore, that to expect to find in Spinoza a strong religious interest would be as unwarrantable as to look for lilies at the North Pole.

The fact that Spinoza wrote much on religion has been interpreted as an evidence of religious interest; but one could as well argue that, for the same reason, Lucretius was a man of strong religious interest. To justify the assumption in Spinoza's case, it would be necessary to point out in the peculiarities of his thinking a subjective preference for a world controlled by a personal power. But we have seen that on almost every page he betrays the strongest antipathy to such a world. In all his writings there cannot be found the slightest evidence that, even in his early years, the loss of faith in the religious instruction of his youth, caused him any pain. In the case of men of strong religious interest, such a crisis is always attended with grief. The assumption of some[2] that, when Spinoza wrote his first works, his thinking was inspired by the desire of harmonizing religion with reason, and that, in his later works only, did he come to reject religion entirely, cannot be justified. The period in which his thinking had a religious aim, if there ever was such

[1] Freudenthal, "Sp.: Sein Leben u. seine Lehre," I, 197.
[2] Avenarius for example.

a period, was already passed before the composition of any of his works.

The fact that Spinoza thought and wrote much on religious matters is adequately explained by the circumstance that these subjects were the ones with which he was occupied at the time when his scientific interest awoke. They lay immediately in his way, and it would have been very strange, in any case, if he had not dealt with them.

The supposed expressions of religious interest, when sifted, turn out to be what we have already found Spinoza's religious doctrines to be, either empty phraseology or expressions of the cognitive interest. The introduction to his "Improvement of the Understanding" may be taken as the most characteristic example. It reads as follows:

"After experience had taught me that all the things which frequently obtain in ordinary life were vain and futile; when I saw that all things which I was wont to fear were neither good nor bad, except in so far as the mind is affected by them; I finally decided to inquire whether there were something that is an attainable real good, by which alone, all other things having been rejected, the mind would be affected; whether, indeed, there were something which, when found and possessed, would enable me to enjoy continual and supreme happiness forever. I say 'finally decided,' for at first thought it seemed unwise to be willing to drop a certain thing for one as yet uncertain. I saw in fact the advantages of honor and riches, and that I should be forced to renounce the pursuit of them, if I wished to give serious attention to something different and new; and, if perchance the highest happiness really resided in those things, I saw that I should be deprived of it; but, if it did not reside in them and I should give attention to them, I should also be deprived of the highest happiness.

I considered the question, therefore, whether it were not perhaps possible to arrive at a new mode of life, or at least at a certainty concerning its existence, without changing the usual conduct of my life; but I often attempted it in vain. For those things in life which, as is evident from men's actions, are esteemed to be the highest good may be reduced to these three: riches, honor, and sensual pleasure. By these three things the mind is so distracted that it is able to think very little about any other good. For as regards sensual pleasure, the mind is thereby rendered so inactive that it rests in it as if in some real good; so that it is in the highest degree hindered from thinking about any other; and such enjoyment is followed by the greatest depression of spirits, which, if it does not suspend the mind's activity, at least disturbs and dulls it.

By the pursuit of honors and riches also the mind is not a little distracted, especially when they are sought for their own sake; for then they are assumed to be the *summum bonum*. But by honor the mind is still more distracted than by riches; for it is always supposed to be good for its own sake, and as a final end, to the attainment of which all things are employed as means. . . . . When I saw, therefore, that all these things would hinder me from applying myself to any new mode of life; that, in fact, they were so opposed thereto, that either the one or the other would have to be renounced, I was compelled to inquire, which would be the more advantageous to me. . . . . After earnest reflection, I came to see that I should be leaving certain evils for a certain good. . . . . The evils were seen to have resulted from the fact, that happiness or unhappiness depends on the quality of the object loved. For unless a thing is loved, no quarrels arise concerning it; and there will be no sadness, if it perish; no envy if it is possessed by another,—no fear, no hatred, in a word, no perturbations of the mind at all. All these arise when we love those things which can perish, such as the objects of which I have just spoken. But love towards an eternal and infinite thing feeds the mind with joy only and is free from all sadness."

The "Improvement of the Understanding" was composed, as is well-known, while Spinoza was studying Bacon's "Novum Organum" and Descartes' "Discours de la Méthode." The influence of Descartes is easily discerned, especially in the form. We subjoin, in opposite columns, the introductory words of Spinoza's work and corresponding passages from Descartes':

*Improvement of the Understanding.*[1]

"After experience taught me that *all things which frequently obtain in ordinary life were vain and futile, . . .* I finally decided to inquire *whether there were something that is an attainable real good;* . . . . whether in fact there were something which, *when found and possessed would enable me to enjoy continual and supreme happiness forever.*"

"For those things in life which, as is evident from men's actions, are esteemed to be the highest good are reducible to these three: riches, honor, and sensual pleasure."

*Discours de la Méthode.*[2]

For I have already reaped such fruits [from my method] that, although when viewed philosophically, *nearly all the divers activities and undertakings of men seem to me vain and futile,* I never cease to receive extreme satisfaction from the progress I think I have made in the search of truth, and to receive such hopes for the future that, *if among the occupations of men there is some one that is really good and important, I venture to believe it is this one which I have chosen.*" (I. 3).

(See next page for Note 2.)

[1] *De Intellectus,* etc. "Postquam me experientia docuit, *omnia, quæ in communi vita occurrunt, vana et futilia esse: . .*

"When I saw that all the sources of my fears are neither good nor bad, except in so far as the mind is affected by them,"—

"My third maxim was to attempt always to conquer myself rather than fortune, and to change my desires rather than the order of the world, and in general to accustom myself to believe that there is nothing entirely within our power, except our thoughts." (III. 4 Cf. III. 5).

"For although I really saw these things clearly, I was nevertheless not able on that account to lay aside all love of riches, sensual pleasure and fame" (p. 5).

"Which I often attempted in vain." (p. 3).

"But I confess there is need of prolonged exercise and of oft-repeated meditation, in order to accustom oneself to look at all things in this way." (III. 4).

constitui tandem inquirere, *an aliquid daretur, quod verum bonum,* et sui communicabile esset; . . . . . imo an aliquid daretur, *quo invento et acquisito, continua ac summa in æternum fruerer laetitia.*"

"Quae plerumque in vita occurrunt, et apud homines, ut ex eorum operibus colligere licet, tanquam summum bonum aestimantur, ad haec tria rediguntur: divitias scilicet, honorem, atque libidinem."

"Cum viderem omnia, a quibus et quae timebam, nihil neque boni neque mali in se habere, nisi quatenus ab iis animus movebatur."

"Nam quamvis haec mente adeo clare perciperem, non poteram tamen ideo omnem avaritiam, libidinem, atque gloriam deponere" (p. 5).

"Quod saepe frustra tentavi" (p. 1).

[2] *Discours, etc.* "Car j'en ai [de ma méthode] déjà recueilli de tels fruits, que . . . . encore que *regardant d'un œil de philosophe les diverses actions et entreprises de tous les hommes, il n'y en ait quasi aucune qui ne me semble vaine et inutile,* je ne laisse pas de recevoir une extreme satisfaction du progrès que je pense avoir déjà fait en la recherche de la vérité, et de recevoir de telles esperances pour l'avenir, *que si, entre les occupations des*

As regards the way in which they introduce their common subject only two noteworthy differences appear: (1) Spinoza, consistently with his general habit, employs, when he can, language that has more or less of religious associations, as *in æternum* for permanent, while Descartes does nothing of the kind; and (2) *les diverses actions et enterprises des hommes*, which both pronounce vain, are specifically named by Spinoza as the pursuit of riches, honor, and sensual pleasure, each of which he treats in some detail.

Many other striking points of resemblance between the two writings will be discovered by anyone who will take the pains to compare them carefully. The likeness which Spinoza's introduction bears to the way Descartes approaches the same subject, would justify the supposition that Spinoza borrowed from Descartes at least the idea of writing it in the form of personal experience,—that, in short, this form was *not spontaneous*, and represents a hypothetical rather than a real experience. It may be a mere pedagogical device. One may doubt whether he actually aimed to describe anything more than the typical experience of a rational man.

But if the experience related was literally his own. we should still be making a mistake to regard

*hommes . . . il y en a quelqu'une qui soit solidement bonne et importante, j'ose croire que c'est celle que j'ai choisie.*" (I. 3).

"Ma troisième maxime était de tâcher toujours plutôt à me vaincre que la fortune, et à changer mes desirs que l'ordre du monde, et généralement de m'accoutumer à croire qu'il n'y a rien qui soit entièrement en notre pouvoir que nos pensées." (III. 4. Cf. III. 5).

"Mais j'avoue qu'il est besoin d'un long exercice et d'une méditation souvent réiterée pour s'accoutumer à regarder de ce biais toutes les choses" (p. 36).

it as evidence of a religious interest. A religious interest, as we have shown, resolves itself into a subjective preference for a world-view that contains a genuine God. What he was seeking was not God, nor any grounds for positing the existence of God, but the *summum bonum*; and this he was quite satisfied to find, not in the belief that the world is controlled by a personal power, but in what he rather enigmatically called "the knowledge of the mind's union with the whole of nature"[1]—of nature unidealized, the system of mechanical forces. This "union," or "knowledge" of it, (the two expressions seem to designate the same thing) is mentioned in other works; but its nature is so unclearly described that we should have to abandon all hope of understanding it, if we did not know its equivalents. It is the same as the *Amor Dei Intellectualis*, which we have already considered, and as "the love toward an eternal and infinite thing,"[2] mentioned in this connection. But these formulae are so vague to Spinoza's thought that they represent several different things at will: (1) the satisfaction the intellect finds in a system of fixed laws, (2) the mere joy of cognition, and (3) such a recognition of the necessity and invariable order of nature as quenches all desire for anything else than the actual; the "love" of an eternal and infinite thing (changeless and resistless nature) thus saving us from the disappointments of those who set their hearts on riches, honor, pleasure, or any other perishable and

[1] De Int. Emend., Opera I, p. 6.—"cognitionem unionis, quam mens cum tota Natura habet."

[2] De Int., Opera I, Emend., p. 5. "Amor erga rem aeternam et infinitam."

variable objects of desire. In this aspect it is not essentially different from the happiness which, according to Descartes, those possess who "cease not to recognize the limitations prescribed for them by nature, and are so fully persuaded nothing is in their power except their own thoughts, that this alone is sufficient to prevent them from having any affection for other things; and who thus dispose of them so absolutely that they have in this fact some reason for esteeming themselves richer, more powerful, freer, and happier than those, who, for want of this philosophy, are unable, however much favored by nature and fortune, to have in their power all they desire."[1] If Spinoza's language is that of a religious spirit, so is Descartes'.

It should be observed that this supposed mystical "union" has for its auxiliaries: (1) Moral Philosophy; (2) Pedagogy; (3) Medicine; and (4) Mechanics.[2]

With the *value* of these thoughts of Spinoza's, considered as ethical doctrines, we are in no way concerned. It is sufficient for our purpose to note that neither in the result at which he arrives, nor in the way in which he reaches it, can be found the slightest influence of a religious interest.[3]

In Spinoza's different writings, especially where he has occasion to vindicate his views against the

[1] Discours de la Méthode, p. 36. Cf. Sp. De Int. Emend., p. 5.

[2] De Int. Emend., p. 6.

[3] We regard as misleading, therefore, Professor Royce's treatment of this passage in his "Spirit of Modern Philosophy," and also Freudenthal's in the work just published, "Spinoza," etc., I, p. 109.

charge of irreligion, we sometimes meet language that sounds like the profession of a profound religious experience. In his correspondence with Blyenbergh, for example, occurs this characteristic passage: "In the meantime I know (that which supplies me with the highest satisfaction and peace of mind) that all things come to pass by the power and immutable decree of a Being supremely perfect."[1] How naïve it would be to mistake this for a *bona fide* expression of that religious peace which the Christian saint sometimes professes in adversity as a result of the assurance of divine care, the reader who has followed us thus far need not be told. Our analysis of Spinoza's "supremely perfect Being" has shown that it is nothing more than the mechanical cause of impersonal, unethical nature, whose perfection consists only in its size and immutability.

In so far therefore as this language is anything more than a gloss employed to vindicate his system from the charge of impiety, it can be understood only as an expression of the satisfaction which the scientific mind finds in the uniformity of nature. As Spinoza was the very impersonation of the cognitive interest, the satisfaction he describes may have been real; but it was in no sense a religious experience.

[1] Opera II, Epist. 21 (olim 34), p. 276.—Agnosco interim (id quod summam mihi praebet satisfactionem et mentis tranquillitatem) cuncta potentia Entis summe perfecti ac ejus immutabili ita fieri decreto.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion we may briefly summarize the results, already stated at different places in the foregoing chapters, to which our investigations have brought us.

An accurate description of Spinoza's system is not given when it is called Pantheism. This word is so vague in its meaning that it may be applied to every sort of Monism—even to Materialism on the one hand and to certain forms of Theism on the other. Etymologically the term ought to denote only such systems as transfigure the world by elevating it into God, i. e., by spiritualizing it. In systems of this type the world is swallowed up in God, God being the only reality. But it is possible to read the term in the opposite direction also, and to apply it to systems which bring God down to the level of the mechanical world, i. e., substitute the de-spiritualized world for God. In systems of this type God is swallowed up in the world, or rather is abolished that the mechanical world may be the sole reality. If, from the standpoint of religion, we are to give Spinoza's system an unambiguous name, it is evident that we must employ some other term than Pantheism. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to call it by a name that has often been used as an opprobrious epithet; but, it scarcely need be added, the present writer employs the term in its strictly etymological signification, as applying to a system of thought, and in no way as dishonoring the blameless man who created that system. The right name for

Spinoza's philosophy is Atheistic Monism. It represents a world-view which, in its essential features, is the very antithesis of that required by the religious consciousness.

Particular utterances of Spinoza's which, taken by themselves, seem obviously to express religious conceptions and religious feeling, evaporate under critical examination into mere phraseology; a part of which may be made intelligible by translating it into terms of his atheistic philosophy, while a residuum remains unintelligible, although it is accounted for by his demonstrable purpose of sometimes accommodating his language to the religious views of the time.

Personally Spinoza had no religious interest properly so-called, but only a scientific interest in religion; which is something quite different. In fact, it is hardly too much to say that the only interest he had in anything was scientific, philosophical. He made religion the object of reflection, not because it lay near his heart, but because the peculiar circumstances of his life thrust the subject in the way of his active intellect.

FINIS.

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Which is an application of the scientific method to philosophy. The old philosophical systems were mere air-castles (constructions of abstract theories), built in the realm of pure thought. The Philosophy of Science is a systematization of positive facts; it takes experience as its foundation, and uses the systematized formal relations of experience (mathematics, logic, etc.) as its method. It is opposed on the one hand to the dogmatism of groundless a priori assumptions, and on the other hand, to the scepticism of negation which finds expression in the agnostic tendencies of to-day.

## Monism Means a Unitary World-Conception

There may be different aspects and even contrasts, diverse views and opposite standpoints, but there can never be contradiction in truth. Monism is not a one-substance theory, be it materialistic or spiritualistic or agnostic; it means simply and solely CONSISTENCY. All truths form one consistent system, and any dualism of irreconcilable statements indicates that there is a problem to be solved; there must be fault somewhere either in our reasoning or in our knowledge of facts. Science always implies Monism, i. e., a unitary world-conception.

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